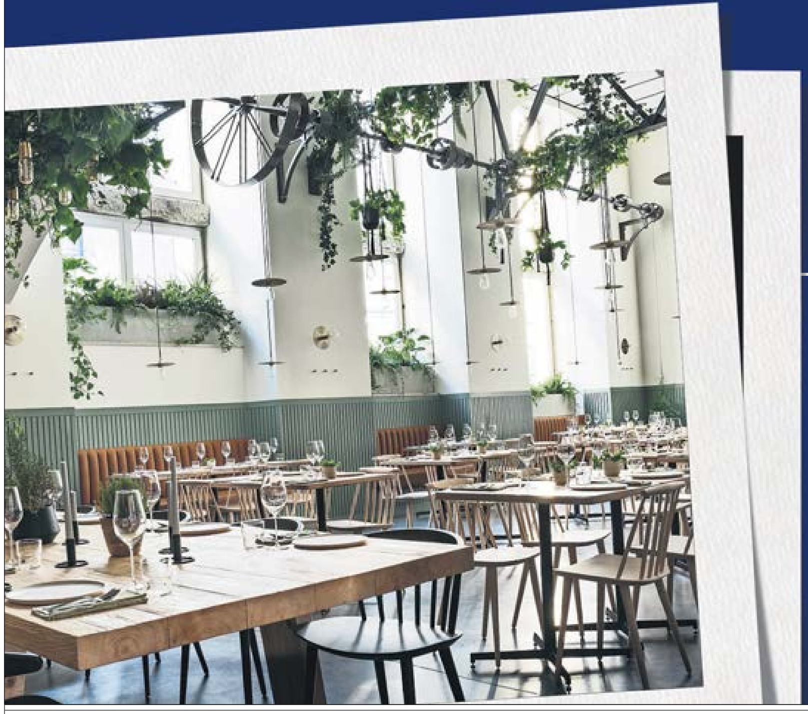
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*Saturday*

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# The Guardian

Newspaper of the year

# Patients paying £550 an hour for private GPs

**Sarah Marsh**
**Denis Campbell**

Patients are paying up to £550 an hour to see private GPs amid frustration at the delays many face getting an appointment with an NHS doctor.

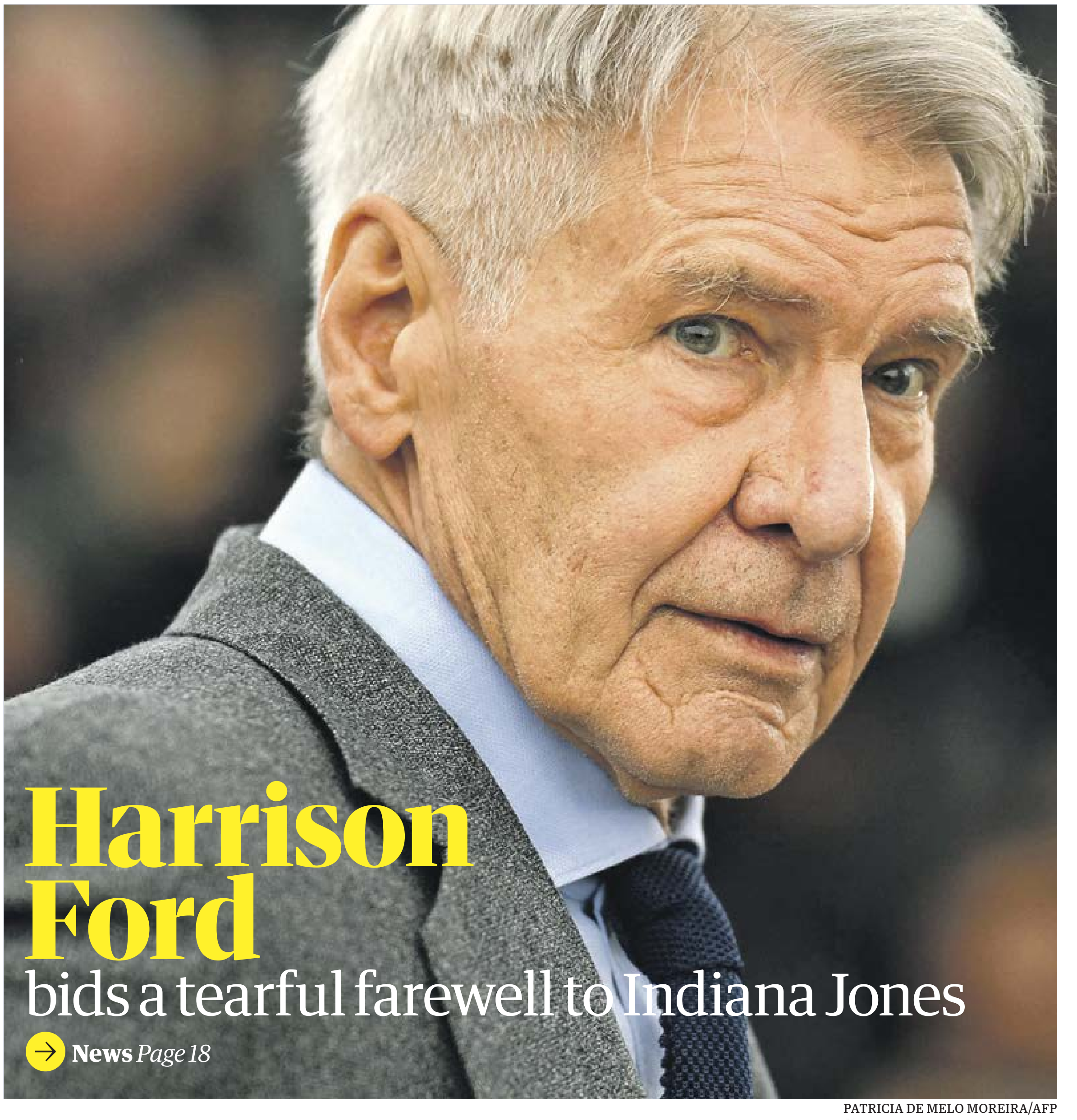
Growing numbers of paid-for GP services are opening up across Britain in the latest sign of how the NHS's inability to offer prompt care is creating a surge in demand for private doctors. Clinics are wooing customers by offering short-notice consultations that involve seeing a doctor face-to-face or remotely and can last for much longer than the standard 10-minute NHS equivalent.

"Private GP services are one of the big growth areas of a burgeoning private healthcare sector," said David Hare, the chief executive of the Independent Healthcare Providers Network, a trade body.

The London General Practice on Harley Street in London has the highest fees among the 25 non-NHS GP providers the Guardian looked at. It charges £275 for 30 minutes with a family doctor, £412 for 45 minutes and £550 for an hour. It rises to £348 for a 30-minute slot if it is out of hours or on a bank holiday. A GP will undertake a house call for £500, £550 or £575, depending on the time of day.

Further along Harley Street, which is synonymous with private medicine, another practice charges £220 for a half-hour appointment and £400 for the full hour.

The number of people using private GPs is small compared with the 1 million a day in 16 →



# Harrison Ford

bids a tearful farewell to Indiana Jones

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PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/AFP

## Tesco chair to stand down after allegations

John Allan is to stand down as chair of Tesco after allegations of inappropriate behaviour 'risked becoming a distraction' to the supermarket chain.

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## Your free food magazine A taste of summer

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# 20/05/2023

News

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**Killer sudoku and cryptic crossword** *Journal page 12*

**Weather** *Page 59*



◀ *John Allan, who had been Tesco's chair since 2015, denies three out of the four allegations against him*
PHOTOGRAPH: TOM STOCKILL/CAMERA PRESS

# Tesco chair to stand down after claims of inappropriate behaviour

**Anna Isaac**
**Joanna Partridge**

John Allan is to stand down as chair of Tesco after allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

Allan, who has been chair of the UK's biggest supermarket since 2015, will step down at the retailer's annual general meeting (AGM) on 16 June.

The announcement yesterday came 10 days after the Guardian reported that Allan had allegedly touched the bottom of a senior member of Tesco staff in June 2022, at the company's last AGM.

In a statement, Tesco said it had conducted an extensive review into the allegation relating to the AGM but had "not identified any evidence or complaints" against Allan.

Byron Grote, the senior independent director at Tesco, said: "While we have received no complaints about John's conduct and made no findings of wrongdoing, these allegations risk becoming a distraction to Tesco."

Allan said the allegations were "utterly baseless" and that "I remain determined to prove my innocence".

Four allegations about Allan emerged during the Guardian's investigation into the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) - the UK's foremost business lobbying group. Allan was president of the organisation between 2018 and 2020 and then vice-president until October 2021.

He has denied three of the four claims made against him.

As well as the allegation relating to Tesco, it was also claimed he had touched the bottom of a staff member at the CBI during its annual dinner in 2019.

Sources also alleged that Allan, 74, had made inappropriate remarks on those occasions as well as separate, similar comments to two other female members of CBI staff in November 2019 and in 2021 respectively.

Some of the women said they were offended by the alleged actions and considered his behaviour to be sexual harassment.

Allan has admitted making a comment about a CBI staffer's appearance that she found to be offensive in 2019. Allan apologised for the remark after discussion with the group's then director general, Carolyn Fairbairn.

In response to this incident, a spokesperson for Allan said: "Mr Allan was mortified after making the comment in 2019 and he immediately apologised."

After yesterday's announcement by Tesco, Allan issued his own statement. It said: "It is with regret that I am having to prematurely stand down from my position as chair of Tesco plc following the anonymous and unsubstantiated allegations made against me, as reported by the Guardian. These allegations are utterly baseless, as the internal procedures undertaken by Tesco prove. Tesco undertook an 'extensive internal review' which included inviting Tesco employees and ex-employees to come forward on an anonymous basis if they had concerns about my conduct.

"Tesco also conducted outreach to those who attended the meeting where the incident allegedly happened, and video footage of the meeting has also been reviewed. There is no evidence of any wrongdoing at that time or at any stage of my chairmanship at Tesco and I remain determined to prove my innocence."

Tesco said in a statement to the stock market that Allan's tenure as chair had been due to end shortly and that a search for his successor had been initiated in recent months, with the search due to conclude shortly.

The company said it had not received any complaints about Allan's conduct, either at the 2022 annual meeting or during his time as chair, and had not made any findings of wrongdoing.

The retailer said it had immediately launched an "extensive review" into the allegation about Allan's conduct at the 2022 AGM. It said it had asked colleagues to come forward if they had concerns regarding his behaviour, and had contacted those at the meeting as well as employees who had since left the company.

Tesco also said it had reviewed video footage of the shareholder meeting, and had looked at records of internal complaints, including from its confidential whistleblowing service.

Grote thanked Allan on behalf of the board for his contribution to Tesco during his eight years as chair, adding that he had "successfully led the board through the turnaround and Covid while helping to rebuild the business".

Grote, who is also the chair of the company's audit committee, has been confirmed as interim chair by Tesco's board, and will lead this year's AGM. He will hold the role until a permanent chair is appointed.

## Why support the Guardian?

Katharine Viner
*Editor-in-chief*

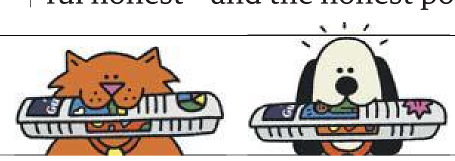


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◀ *CCTV footage shows one of the water buffaloes crashing through the solid cover of the Smiths' newly built £70,000 pool*

# The day eight water buffaloes escaped and went for a dip in Essex



**Anna Tims**

When Andy and Lynette Smith retired, the thought of going on an African wildlife safari may or may not have crossed their minds. Little did they know that in order to watch a herd of 18 buffaloes splashing about in the water, all they would have to do is open the curtains and look out into the back garden of their home … in Essex.

The couple say their garden and pool were ruined after the animals, which weighed about 600kg each, escaped from a rare breeds farm and went on the rampage, causing more than £25,000 of damage.

Eight of them ended up falling through the pool cover into the water. Thankfully, as their name suggests, the water buffaloes could swim, and they were rescued from the pool by the farmer. Nearly a year later, the couple have not yet received a payout from the farm's insurer. However, after being contacted by the Guardian, NFU Mutual eventually agreed it would cover the full £25,000 repair bill for pool and garden.

The incident happened when an electric fence failed last July, allowing the herd to breach a wooden fence and hedge separating their field from the Smiths' garden.

"When my wife went to make the morning tea, she glanced out of the kitchen window and saw eight buffaloes in the pool," said Andy Smith, a retired businessman.

"She called 999 and was told the fire brigade don't accept hoax calls. It took some persuading to get them to take us seriously. When they arrived, one of the buffaloes, spooked by their hi-vis jackets, headed straight at them."

Eventually the farmer arrived from next door and helped the animals - none of which were harmed - out of the water.



▲ *The buffaloes reached the pool after an electric fence failed. Eventually the farmer, right, arrived to escort them back to the neighbouring rare breeds farm*

Water buffaloes, also known as Asian buffaloes, can reach more than 6ft in height, and males have horns up to 5ft long. In the wild, they spend much of their time submerged in the muddy waters of tropical forests.

The Smiths were mystified as to how the animals ended up in their pool until they examined recordings from a CCTV camera in their garden. The footage showed the buffaloes wandering into the garden early on a Sunday morning. One stepped on to the solid pool cover and fell through it, causing others to stampede across the garden lawn.

> *'When my wife went to make the morning tea, she saw eight buffaloes in the pool'*
>
> **Andy Smith**
> *Retired business owner*

During the next 15 minutes, seven more animals toppled into the pool, turning the water from turquoise to a murky dark colour.

"Buffaloes are top heavy and the porcelain tiles round the pool were slippery, so they lost their grip, and once they were in, they couldn't get out again," Smith said.

"The previous afternoon, we had hosted a pool party for our young grandchildren and their friends. If the invasion had happened just hours earlier, it could have been very serious."

The damage to the new £70,000 pool was extensive. NFU Mutual, which insures the rare breeds farm, accepted liability.

"It took 15 weeks for them to send an assessor round and nearly six months to offer a sum that was more than £8,000 short of the two quotes they themselves obtained," Smith said.

"We accept that they deal with claims far more serious than a damaged pool, but their failure to communicate has caused us countless sleepless nights.

"The pool was our retirement luxury bought when I sold the business. It was earned by a lot of sweat and toil, but after the buffaloes' swim, it was leaking 75 gallons a day and was unusable."

NFU Mutual said: "We apologise for the delay paying this claim and in particular the initial wait for an inspector's visit, which took too long and fell short of our usual standards.

"We have a duty to all of our members to ensure we validate the cost of claims and in this instance, we needed to gain further assurance around the costs involved in repairing the damage."

# Restaurant's nude David advert ruled too spicy for Glaswegians

**Jamie Grierson**

They love a macaroni cheese pie but, according to advertising giants, the vision of Michelangelo's David in the buff is too much to stomach for Glasgwegians.

An Italian restaurant in Scotland's biggest city has been forced to change its adverts featuring the sculpture after the ad company Global Media Group blocked them because of David's nudity.




▲ *The Barolo restaurant ads before and after David was covered up*

The designs commissioned by the Barolo restaurant were rejected from spaces in the subway over modesty concerns, according to the Glasgow Herald. The poster showed the Renaissance sculpture holding a slice of pizza with the phrase: "It doesn't get more Italian."

Global's outdoor advertising division runs the marketing space; the media group is known for its portfolio of radio stations, including Capital, Heart and LBC.

A full reprint of the adverts with the sculpture cropped at the waist was required for the posters to be displayed on the subway.

Mario Gizzi, the director of DRG Group, which runs Barolo and several restaurants in Scotland, said: "This is a globally recognised piece of art. It is taught in schools. People from all over the world travel to see it.

"It's not the 1500s any more, it's 2023. Are we really saying that the people of Glasgow can't handle seeing a naked statue?

"Barolo is all about Italy's classic cooking and Michelangelo's David is one of the country's most famous artworks - as the ad states, it doesn't get more Italian than that."

The 5.17-metre (17ft) statue, which depicts a naked David - the biblical figure who kills the giant Goliath - was sculpted at the beginning of the 16th century.

In March, the principal of a Christian charter school in Tallahassee, Florida, resigned after her students were shown a photograph of the statue of David, prompting at least one parent to complain that the children had been exposed to pornography.

Hope Carrasquilla quit after the campus's governing board told her to step down or be fired because of the complaints.

Global Media Group has been approached for comment.

▼ *The sinking is exacerbated by sea level rise and increasing hurricane intensity caused by global heating*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALEXANDER SPATARI/GETTY



# New York City is sinking under the weight of its skyscrapers

**Oliver Milman**
*US environment reporter*

New York City is sinking, in part because of the extraordinary weight of its vertiginous buildings, worsening the flooding threat posed to the metropolis from the rising seas, new research has found.

The Big Apple may be the city that never sleeps but it is a city that certainly sinks, subsiding by approximately 1-2mm each year on average, with some areas of New York City plunging at double this rate, according to researchers.

This sinking is exacerbating the impact of sea level rise, which is accelerating as the world's glaciers melt away and seawater expands because of global heating. The water that flanks New York City has risen by about 22cm (9in), since 1950 and big flooding events from storms could be up to four times more frequent than now by the end of the century owing to the combination of sea level rise and hurricanes strengthened by the climate crisis.

"A deeply concentrated population of 8.4 million people faces varying degrees of hazard from inundation in New York City," researchers wrote in the new study, published in the Earth's Future journal.

The authors added that the risks faced by New York City would be shared by many other coastal cities around the world as the climate crisis deepened. "The combination of tectonic and anthropogenic subsidence, sea level rise, and increasing hurricane intensity imply an accelerating problem along coastal and riverfront areas," they wrote.

This trend is being magnified by the sheer bulk of New York City's built infrastructure. The researchers calculated that the city's structures weighed about 590m tonnes, which is roughly equivalent to the weight of 140 million elephants.

This enormous heft is pushing down on a jumble of materials found in the city's ground. While many of the largest buildings are on solid bedrock, there is a mixture of other sands and clays that have been built over, adding to a sinking effect that is naturally occurring along the US east coast as the land reacts to the retreat of glaciers after the last ice age.

**590m**
*Number of tonnes that New York City's structures weigh, equivalent to about 140 million elephants*

"It's not something to panic about immediately but there's this ongoing process that increases the risk of inundation from flooding," said Tom Parsons, a geophysicist at the US Geological Survey, who led the new research.

"The softer the soil, the more compression there is from the buildings. It wasn't a mistake to build such large buildings in New York but we've just got to keep in mind every time you build something there you push down the ground a little bit more."

In 2012, New York was hit by Hurricane Sandy, which flooded parts of the subway and caused widespread damage, including power blackouts. Then, in 2021, Hurricane Ida flooded parts of the city, causing several people to drown. Scientists say both events were worsened by the effects of global heating.

# 'Glad the dice rolled this way': Rushdie makes first public appearance

**Sarah Shaffi**

Salman Rushdie has made his first public appearance since he was stabbed and lost sight in one eye after being attacked at a literary event, joking that it was "nice to be back – as opposed to not being back, which was also an option".

The author was a surprise guest at the Pen America gala on Thursday night in New York. He was greeted with a standing ovation, according to the New York Times. After his remark about being back, he said he was "pretty glad the dice rolled this way".

Rushdie was stabbed in the neck and torso while on stage at the Chautauqua Institution in New York in 2022. He was in hospital for six weeks, and lost the use of one hand as well as losing vision in one eye.

He attended the gala to accept the Pen Centenary Courage award. However, he said "the true courage was not shown by me" but by the people who had rushed to save his life and "were the heroes". "If it had not been for these people, I most certainly would not be standing here today," he said. "The courage, that day, was all theirs." He said he did not know their names, or see their faces, but he owed his life to them.

Hadi Matar, 24, was arrested after the attack, which also left the talk's moderator injured. Matar has been charged with attempted second-degree murder and second-degree assault, and has pleaded not guilty.



▲ *Salman Rushdie was a surprise guest at literary gala in New York*

# Brazilian official charged over murders of Pereira and Phillips

**Tom Phillips**
*Rio de Janeiro*

Federal police have brought criminal charges against the former head of Brazil's Indigenous protection agency for alleged acts of omission they believe indirectly paved the way for the murders of Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips, a British journalist and longtime Guardian contributor, in the Amazon.

Brazil's former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro made Marcelo Xavier the head of the Indigenous agency Funai in July 2019.

Xavier – a former police chief whom activists accused of playing a key role in the dismantling of Indigenous protections – was removed from his position in December after Bolsonaro lost the presidential election to his leftist rival, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Yesterday afternoon it emerged that Francisco Badenes, the federal police chief responsible for the inquiry into the murders of Pereira and Phillips last year, had formally accused Xavier of indirectly contributing to those crimes on the grounds that he had failed to take steps to protect Indigenous protection workers in the Amazon.

The two-page federal police indictment is dated 12 May 2023 but was only reported yesterday afternoon by the Brazilian broadcaster TV Globo.

The accusation against Xavier is based on the legal concept of *dolus eventualis* – when a person is aware of the risk of a crime taking place but fails to act to prevent it. Another senior Funai official, Alcir Amaral, was indicted on the same charges.

Pereira worked for Funai until he was removed from his post in late 2019, two weeks after he helped lead an operation targeting illegal miners in the remote Javari Valley region where he and Phillips were killed.

Around the same time one of Pereira's Funai colleagues, Maxciel Pereira dos Santos, was shot dead in the city of Tabatinga. After that still unsolved assassination, Xavier was reportedly warned of the risk of further violence in the region but failed to act.

Pereira and Phillips were killed on 5 June following a four-day reporting trip looking at the situation facing Indigenous communities in the Javari region. Their bodies were found after a 10-day, Indigenous-led search.

Xavier sparked fury in the days that followed the men's disappearance, wrongly insinuating that Phillips and Pereira had entered an Indigenous territory without government permission. A judge later ruled that the two men never entered Indigenous lands, conducting interviews outside the borders of the territory.

Neither Xavier nor Amaral made any immediate comment about the accusations. Writing on Twitter last August, Xavier claimed the murders were being manipulated by leftist opponents of Bolsonaro's government. "The truth is that we investigated the facts swiftly and efficiently – which allowed us to give society a fast response," he wrote.

**'Economic coercion'**
**G7 countries plan action against China**
*Page 11*

**Sleepless nights**
**What's behind the UK's rise in fatigue?**
*Page 20*





# 'It's like a switch': menopause drug that stops hot flushes may be approved in UK this year

**Hannah Devlin**
*Science correspondent*

Menopause treatments are set to be revolutionised by a drug that acts directly on the brain to prevent hot flushes, leading doctors predict.

Speaking after the US approved the first non-hormonal menopause drug, made by Astellas Pharma, experts said the treatment could be transformative for the hundreds of thousands of women in the UK for whom hormone replacement drugs (HRT) are not suitable.

Fezolinetant was licensed in the US on 12 May and could be approved for use in the UK by the end of the year.

"This is going to be a completely blockbuster drug," said Prof Waljit Dhillo, an endocrinologist at Imperial College London, who led a trial in 2017 that paved the way for the drug's development. "It's like a switch. Within a day or two the flushes go away. It's unbelievable how well these drugs work. It's going to be completely game changing for a lot of women."

The drug, which is being assessed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), works by blocking a brain protein called neurokinin-3 that plays a unique role in regulating body temperature in menopausal women.

A major clinical trial of fezolinetant published in March showed that, after 12 weeks of use, it reduced the frequency of hot flushes by about 60% in women with moderate or severe symptoms, compared with a 45% reduction in the placebo group. Women also said the drug reduced the severity of hot flushes and improved the quality of their sleep.

"What's amazing about these drugs is how quickly they work and how big an effect they have," said Prof Richard Anderson, co-director of the centre for reproductive health at the University of Edinburgh. "Typically, oestrogen takes several weeks to have an effect. With these, women are reporting effects from the first tablet."

About 70% of women going through the menopause experience hot flushes and 10-20% describe them as "near intolerable", severely affecting daily life, exercise and sleep and it is the symptom that most often prompts women to seek treatment. It can feel as though a wave of heat has washed over the upper body, leaving the face, neck and chest flushed and sweaty. Some people feel lightheaded or have a racing heart.

> ***'This is a blockbuster drug. Within a day or two flushes go away. It's game changing'***
>
> **Prof Waljit Dhillo**
> *Imperial College London*

In England, nearly 2 million women were prescribed at least one HRT medication last year, but these drugs are not suitable for those with a history of breast or ovarian cancer, blood clots or with untreated high blood pressure.

There are also women who experience side-effects or who would prefer a non-hormonal alternative.

"If you can't take HRT there isn't much in the way of really effective options," said Annice Mukherjee a consultant endocrinologist and an honorary professor at the University of Coventry. "Women need options."

Since the new drug acts directly on the pathway that controls temperature it does not replace oestrogen, which declines steeply at the menopause, and so would not address the wider range of symptoms that some women experience, including fatigue, muscle and bone weakness, vaginal atrophy and mood swings. The EMA is expected to make a decision on Astellas's drug towards the end of 2023, with the UK decision expected a few months after.

Experts said the latest generation of drugs – Bayer is due to complete a phase-3 trial of a similar drug candidate later this year – underlined the critical role of investment in basic research into the menopause.

They come after decades of research by the US neuropathologist Prof Naomi Rance, who identified a specific group of neurons that become enlarged in the brains of menopausal women. She went on to reveal, by measuring tiny temperature variations in the tails of rats, that these neurons release neurokinin-3, which can trigger hot flushes.

"I realised that understanding the brain circuitry controlling hot flushes could be useful for designing new treatments, but I never imagined that it would happen during my life," said Rance, of the University of Arizona. "I was thrilled to learn about the Food and Drug Administration approval, in part because it illustrates how basic science research can lead to clinical applications."

Rance's discovery prompted a trial, led by Dhillo at Imperial College, which showed that a compound similar to fezolinetant could block hot flushes in women.

"From our grant being awarded by the National Institute for Health Research and the Medical Research Council, within two years we could show it had a 73% reduction in hot flushes – that wouldn't have happened without taxpayers' funding of medical research," he said. "Since doing our studies, we've had women all over the world writing to us saying: 'How can I get this drug?'".

"There's been this attitude that obesity kills, heart disease kills, diabetes kills, women's health doesn't kill," he added. "We can't be in a society and say 51% of the population's problems – if they don't kill them immediately – aren't important."

He welcomed a shift in recent years, including the creation of a women's health strategy, the appointment of a women's health minister and an increase in research on topics including the menopause.



▲ *Jane Fonda said the director René Clément had asked to sleep with her before she filmed a sex scene in the 1964 thriller Joy House* PHOTOGRAPH: LEV RADIN/GETTY

# Fonda says film director asked to see her orgasms

**Sian Cain**

Jane Fonda has said the late French director René Clément asked to sleep with her during the making of the 1964 thriller Joy House, saying he said he "needed to see what my orgasms were like" before a sex scene.

Fonda made the allegation on an episode of the chatshow Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen. She said: "He wanted to go to bed with me because he said the character had to have an orgasm in the movie and he needed to see what my orgasms were like. He said it in French and I pretended I didn't understand.

Fonda's comments come during a period of intense scrutiny in the French film industry, with some women alleging it has continued to perpetuate misogyny and sexual abuse while #MeToo has forced a reckoning in other countries.

The Johnny Depp film Jeanne du Barry was selected as the opening picture of this year's Cannes film festival in the wake of the actor's ugly legal battle with his ex-wife Amber Heard.

**Cannes festival review** *Page 18* →

# ~~NEVER~~ REWARD DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR.

Channel 4 shows won 9 BAFTAs on Sunday night, our most in 22 years. Which is nice.
But even nicer is that we won them for shows that do things differently.
Shows that stick it to the powerful – whether that's taking on the Kremlin, Kabul, or David Beckham in his own home.
Shows that shine a light on teenage mental health, trans bodies – and a sweary nun from Derry.
Shows that no other broadcaster or streamer would dare to air.
It's what Channel 4 is here to do, and what gets us out of bed in the morning (even if we had to hit the snooze button a couple of times on Monday).

▼ *Andy Rourke, left, and Johnny Marr could 'weave around each other with astonishing dexterity'*
PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL SLATTERY



# Andy Rourke Tribute to bassist vital to the sound of the Smiths

**Alexis Petridis**

The creation myth of the Smiths is well-known: inspired by a South Bank Show documentary about the songwriting partnership Leiber and Stoller, Johnny Marr turns up unannounced on Morrissey's doorstep, meets with the singer's approval after being invited to pick a record to play and choosing the Marvelettes' 1966 B-side Paper Boy, returns the next day, when the pair write The Hand That Rocks the Cradle and Suffer Little Children, their extraordinary meditation on the Moors murders: immediate evidence that the partnership, and the band it spawned, would - as Marr put it - "do things differently".

It's a story that Marr's 2016 autobiography Set the Boy Free confirms. But the book also suggests another genesis point for the Smiths, when he is assigned by his school to watch over fellow pupil Andy Rourke, who had effectively been left to his own devices by his divorced parents and developed a drug habit that would grow to encompass heroin. Rourke, who has died aged of pancreatic cancer aged 59, and Marr became friends, performing in teenage bands.

The Smiths initially tried to do without Rourke, but after one gig, Marr fired Dale Hibbert and drafted his friend, despite misgivings about his drug use.

It was a decision that would cause the Smiths problems - Rourke was briefly dismissed in 1986 after being arrested for heroin possession - but the right one nonetheless. It's easy to paint the Smiths as a two-man show: Morrissey and Marr were such lavishly talented artists they cut figures almost impossible to overshadow. Indeed, it's a line of thought that Morrissey has pursued with vigour, belittling the Smiths' rhythm section's contributions, behaving as though they were, in the words of a lawyer instructed to act for drummer Mike Joyce, "as readily replaceable as the parts of a lawnmower". But it isn't true. Rourke was as gifted a bass player as Marr was a guitarist: when fabled session bassist Guy Pratt was drafted into rehearsals after the drug bust, he found himself marvelling at the "sophistication" of what he was expected to learn.



▲ *Rourke, who has died aged 59, seen DJing in Manchester in 2007*

Rourke developed a complex but fluid style of playing, he said, to "overcompensate" for the fact the band only had one guitarist. On 1984's Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now or The Headmaster Ritual, his bass and Marr's guitar weave around each other with quite astonishing dexterity. On This Charming Man, meanwhile, Rourke works in perfect tandem with one of the most famous guitar riffs in the history of alternative rock. If you tended to a romantic view of things, you might suggest the sound Marr and Rourke made together was evidence of their longstanding personal closeness. On the title track of The Queen Is Dead, Rourke's playing is even more propulsive: despite its intricacy, the bass seems to tap into the song's ferocious anger.

He also provided ample evidence of the breadth of music influences funnelled into the Smiths' sound, something that was easy to overlook given the limited musical worldview their frontman was given to espousing in interviews. Morrissey may have thought reggae "vile", but that clearly wasn't a view shared by Rourke: listen to his bass part on the 1986 B-side Rubber Ring. Morrissey "detested" modern soul - "this discofied nonsense" - but on Barbarism Begins at Home, regularly held up as the greatest example of Rourke's playing in the Smiths' oeuvre, he plays writhingly funky slap bass that wouldn't have sounded out of place in the world of "discofied nonsense".

Given his abilities, it seemed strange that Rourke didn't become a blue-chip session player but he seemed more focused on establishing new bands: Freebass with Mani from the Stone Roses and New Order's Peter Hook; Dark with Dolores O'Riordan of the Cranberries; Moondog One with Joyce and Bonehead from Oasis.

None were ever likely to overshadow the Smiths, but the Smiths' impact was such it was hard to see what subsequent venture would: Marr has played with umpteen artists but remains the guitarist from the Smiths; Morrissey might doggedly proclaim whatever music he's currently making to be vastly superior to the Smiths' output, but to little avail. Clearly, they wouldn't have had the same impact - and wouldn't have been the Smiths - with a different frontman or guitarist. But the Smiths also wouldn't have been the Smiths without Andy Rourke.

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# Agency rebuffs the Sussexes' demand for 'paparazzi chase' images

**Jamie Grierson**

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have reportedly demanded a celebrity photo agency hand over images taken during what the royal couple said was a "near-catastrophic" chase with "a ring of highly aggressive paparazzi".

Backgrid, a California-based entertainment picture agency, said on Thursday it rejected the request, which was laid out in a letter from the Sussexes' legal team, demanding it provide the images taken on Tuesday in New York City.

The episode, which has echoes of the death of Harry's mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, who was killed when her car crashed while being followed by paparazzi in Paris in 1997, is said to have happened after the couple and Meghan's mother attended an awards ceremony.

Backgrid told the BBC the letter stated: "We hereby demand that Backgrid immediately provide us with copies of all photos, videos, and/or films taken last night by the freelance photographers after the couple left their event and over the next several hours."

The agency told the broadcaster it had replied: "Perhaps you should sit down with your client and advise them that his English rules of royal prerogative to demand that the citizenry hand over their property to the crown were rejected by this country long ago."

Backgrid and the Sussexes have been contacted for comment.

Harry and Meghan's account has been disputed, with police confirming there had been no reported collisions, injuries or arrests, while Backgrid denied that the paparazzi behaved aggressively, even suggesting that the Sussexes' vehicle was driven erratically. A taxi driver briefly involved has also cast doubt on the couple's statement.

The prime minister, Rishi Sunak, was asked about the incident during an interview with the BBC in Japan, where he was attending the G7 summit. Pressed if he had sympathy with a possible invasion of privacy or safety, Sunak said: "Cars in New York are not really my priority or my responsibility."



▲ *The Duke and Duchess of Sussex say they were chased aggressively*

▼ *From left, the European Council president, Charles Michel; Italy's Giorgia Meloni; Canada's Justin Trudeau; Emmanuel Macron of France; Japan's Fumio Kishida, Joe Biden; Germany's Olaf Scholz; Rishi Sunak; and the EU's Ursula von der Leyen visit a shrine yesterday*



PHOTOGRAPH: KENNY HOLSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

# US to back joint effort by allies to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16 fighters

**Dan Sabbagh**
**Julian Borger**

The US has told its allies it will back a joint international effort to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16 and other modern fighter jets, marking a significant boost to western support for Kyiv as it prepares a major counteroffensive.

Joe Biden had already informed fellow leaders attending a G7 summit in Japan of his decision, a senior administration official said, adding that the plan would include training "on fourth-generation fighter aircraft, including F-16s, to further strengthen and improve the capabilities of the Ukrainian air force".

The fourth generation category includes Britain's Eurofighter Typhoon and France's Mirage 2000.

"As the training takes place over the coming months, our coalition of countries participating in this effort will decide when to actually provide jets, how many we will provide, and who will provide them," the senior official said.

"This training will take place outside Ukraine at sites in Europe and will require months to complete. We hope we can begin this training in the coming weeks."

The decision represents a dramatic shift in stance by Washington, which had previously presented the supply of F-16s to Ukraine as unfeasible.

The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, tweeted: "I welcome the historic decision of the United States and @POTUS to support an international fighter jet coalition. This will greatly enhance our army in the sky. I count on discussing the practical implementation of this decision at the #G7 summit in Hiroshima."

The speed of the U-turn took some allies by surprise. There had been reports the US would give a green light for other states to prepare to supply western fighter jets, but even close allies did not expect Biden to support direct US involvement in a training programme.

"Things are moving really fast in Japan. Faster even than we had dared hoped," one European diplomat said. Rishi Sunak said he welcomed the announcement. The UK would work together with the US, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark "to get Ukraine the combat air capability it needs", he added.

> *'This will greatly enhance our army in the sky'*
>
> **Volodymyr Zelenskiy**
> *Ukrainian president*

Yehor Cherniev, the deputy chair of the Ukrainian parliament's national security committee, said F-16s could be in operation within four months of the start of training.

"When we will have well-trained pilots, the F-16s will be in the sky over Ukraine and will help us to move forward," Cherniev said.

"It's important to us, not just as one more tool for our air defence system, but also to cover our infantry from the sky because without it, we would have more losses."

Even if F-16s and other jets arrived in Ukraine by autumn, they would not be there in time to support the widely anticipated spring-summer offensive Ukraine has been planning.

However, the move represents a significant show of western resolve and could help consolidate any Ukrainian gains.

Cherniev said he thought Biden's decision had been influenced by the speed at which Ukrainians had mastered the use of other sophisticated weaponry, such as the Patriot anti-aircraft system, and pressure from allies.

The shift in the US stance could eventually allow countries such as the Netherlands to export the US-designed jets once pilots and ground crews have been trained.

Cherniev pointed out that Belgium and Denmark had indicated they would supply fighter jets, and said he hoped other countries would declare their readiness in the wake of Biden's announcement.

Biden's change in policy will avoid any embarrassment at the G7 summit. Zelenskiy is expected to visit tomorrow and is likely to repeat his "wings for freedom" request amid concerns Ukraine's small air force will be unable to survive a long war.

While Ukraine's small, Soviet-standard air force is still operational, it is able to run only a dozen or so combat missions a day.

The most obvious problem with any gift of F-16s is that it would take at least three months – and more likely six to nine months – to train Ukrainian pilots and crews.

Kyiv has been identifying a list of potential pilots and teaching them English so they could begin their tuition in the UK.

There are 3,000 F-16s, a jet that dates back to the late 1970s, in service in 25 countries, including several smaller European nations, such as the Netherlands. However, they are not used by the UK, France or Germany, which are able only to provide training and some related services.

▼ *Rishi Sunak in Hiroshima. He will call for the G7 to act if states such as China and Russia stop trading*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAN ROUSSEAU/GETTY IMAGES



# Trade Sunak urges joint action against 'economic coercion'

**Rowena Mason**
*Hiroshima*

The UK and other G7 countries are planning collective action against Russia and China if they threaten trade boycotts for political reasons, with the announcement of a body to deal with "economic coercion".

Rishi Sunak will urge "bold and pragmatic collective action" against hostile states that stop trading with other countries when they disagree with their geopolitical decisions.

He will cite Russia's stranglehold on European gas supplies last year as a situation that could have been met with a collective response.

Other examples include China's punitive tariffs on Australian wine after Canberra called for an inquiry into the origins of Covid, and Beijing's decision to halt trade with Lithuania after it set up an office in Taiwan.

Sunak will set out the UK's plan for countering such trading practices at a session today, with other G7 countries expected to agree on the formation of a new council to discuss collective responses.

Diplomatic sources said there was a recognition that the World Trade Organization was not proving an effective forum for dealing with such action from states such as Russia and China.

The G7 coordination platform on economic coercion will address "growing and pernicious use of coercive economic measures to interfere in the affairs of other states".

Advised by policymakers, businesses and academics, the council will act as an early warning system and formulate where the G7 should "take action when necessary".

Sunak is a leading advocate of the need to counter economic coercion, but others in the G7, such as France, are more wary about taking on Beijing, and have cautioned that the summit should not be seen as "anti-China". Sunak is due to meet Macron for a one-to-one meeting today.

The G7 – which includes the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, as well as the EU – has said its aims are not about "decoupling" from China but rather "derisking" the relationship.

However, Sunak was clear in his assessment of the threat posed by China. "We should be clear-eyed about the growing challenge we face. China is engaged in a concerted and strategic economic contest," he said.

"And when Russia weaponised Europe's energy supplies, it was a sign of what can happen when we rely too much on states who don't share our values.

"Our collective economic security matters now more than ever. By working together and avoiding competition between friends, we can lift our prosperity, innovate faster and out-compete autocratic states."

The move has already angered Beijing. Asked this week about the reported move, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said: "If any country should be criticised for economic coercion, it should be the United States."

Today, the leaders will also discuss efforts to prevent shortages of essential components such as semiconductors. The widely used tech items are largely made in Taiwan, which has been threatened by China.

The UK agreed a new semiconductor partnership with Japan on Thursday and the two countries said they would work together on defence and technology.

Sunak met the Japanese prime minister, Fumio Kishida, for dinner on Thursday night – the only G7 leader to do so apart from the US president, Joe Biden.

## Split decision Trudeau adopts 'manner legs' pose with South Korean politician

**Justin Trudeau's hair has made international headlines, as have his fumbling handshakes and propensity to appear shirtless when cameras are near. Now, the Canadian prime minister's legs have won their moment in the spotlight**

**Ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Trudeau was in South Korea to celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the countries, and try to salvage a multibillion-dollar battery plant deal.**

**Before giving a speech to the national assembly, Trudeau posed for photographs with Korean politicians, including the national assembly speaker, Kim Jin-pyo.**

**Amid the clatter of camera shutters, Kim stood on tiptoes, poking fun at the 20cm height gap between them. Trudeau bent down momentarily to Kim's level, prompting laughter from the Korean delegation. He then spread his legs to put himself at a similar altitude to Kim, a move, known in South Korea as "manner legs", meant to level the height between two people.**

**Korean media largely praised the gesture, with the outlet Chosun calling it a "heartwarming scene" and YTN suggesting it showed a "caring" mindset.**

**The Canadian conservative outlet True North, however, wrote the meeting had "some Canadians accusing Trudeau of embarrassing Canada while abroad once again".**

**It was not the first time the prime minister's greetings with political leaders have received attention.**

**In February, a handshake with Alberta's premier, Danielle Smith, a fierce critic of the prime minister, devolved into an awkward fumble.**

**Trudeau was also the first to dodge Donald Trump's forceful handshake strategy that left world leaders and political rivals bewildered. In their first meeting in 2017, Trudeau put a hand on the then US president's shoulder to brace himself. Leyland Cecco**



▲ *Justin Trudeau adjusts his height to that of the South Korean national assembly speaker, Kim Jin-pyo*
PHOTOGRAPH: YONHAP/EPA



▲ *Police officers monitoring a rally against the G7 summit after leaders visited the Hiroshima memorial park*
PHOTOGRAPH: RODRIGO REYES MARIN/AVALON

# Shadow of nuclear war Flowers laid at memorial to victims of US atomic bomb

**Justin McCurry**
*Hiroshima*

G7 leaders laid flowers at a memorial to the victims of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima yesterday in a sombre opening to a summit overshadowed by fears of a potential nuclear conflict in Ukraine.

As the heavy early morning rain began to ease, the summit's host, the Japanese prime minister, Fumio Kishida, and his wife, Yuko, welcomed leaders and their spouses at the entrance to the city's Peace Memorial Museum, where they viewed graphic reminders of the attack on the city on 6 August 1945 and its gruesome aftermath.

The Japanese leader – whose wife wore a gold pin shaped like an origami crane, a symbol of the city's nuclear legacy – has said that achieving a world free of nuclear weapons was his "life's work".

Joe Biden became the second sitting US president to visit Hiroshima, after Barack Obama in 2016, while Rishi Sunak is the first British prime minister to visit the site of the world's first nuclear attack.

Media were barred from the museum for the length of the visit by the leaders. The group emerged from the museum after about 30 minutes and, led by Kishida and Biden, made the short walk to a cenotaph honouring the 333,907 people whose deaths have been attributed to the atomic bombing almost eight decades ago.

Together, the leaders stepped forward to lay wreaths – given to them by local schoolchildren – on podiums in front of the memorial, with its eternal flame and plaque that reads: "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil."

The burnt-out shell of the A-bomb Dome, one of the few buildings to have survived the attack, could be seen in the distance. After a moment of silence, there was a group ceremony to plant a cherry blossom sapling, propagated from a tree that had survived the atomic blast. The leaders later met a *hibakusha* – a survivor of the bombing.

On a morning steeped in symbolism, this was the first time the leaders of G7 countries – including three that possess nuclear weapons – had visited the museum together.

US officials said Biden, in a repeat of the approach taken by Obama, did not plan to issue an apology – a move that would go down badly in the US, where the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and, three days later, Nagasaki are credited with bringing the Pacific war to a quick end.

But he and the other leaders viewed some of the museum's harrowing exhibits, which included burnt and ripped clothes, the charred contents of a child's lunch box and strands of human hair from people who had suffered radiation exposure.

Kishida, who represents a constituency in Hiroshima, said agreements on the need to realise a world without nuclear weapons were among his goals during the three-day summit, which is expected to be dominated by the war in Ukraine and China's growing military and economic might.

"We will once again confirm our resolve to work for a world without nuclear weapons and we hope to transmit to the world our strong determination to protect the free and open international order based on the rule of law," Kishida told reporters as he left for Hiroshima.

"I hope that here in Hiroshima, the G7 and leaders from elsewhere will show their commitment to peace, which will be remembered in history," he said.

Kishida has tried to move nuclear disarmament up the agenda for this year's summit and reportedly insisted G7 leaders visit not only peace memorials but also the museum.

"I believe the first step toward any nuclear disarmament effort is to provide a first-hand experience of the consequences of the atomic bombing and to firmly convey the reality," he said ahead of the visit to the peace museum.

There is little enthusiasm for reducing nuclear stockpiles, however, at a time when Russia has issued thinly veiled threats to use them against Ukraine, and while North Korea is raising fears of a new nuclear test after a series of long-range missile launches.

# Small boats
## BBC to assess impartiality of migration coverage

**Jim Waterson**
*Media editor*

The BBC has asked an author of a controversial race report to assess whether the broadcaster is impartial in its coverage of people crossing the Channel in small boats.

Samir Shah, who contributed to the government's Sewell report on race relations, has been asked to consider whether a broad range of viewpoints on migration are being reflected in all aspects of the BBC's immigration coverage. He will co-author the assessment with Madeleine Sumption, the director of Oxford University's Migration Observatory.

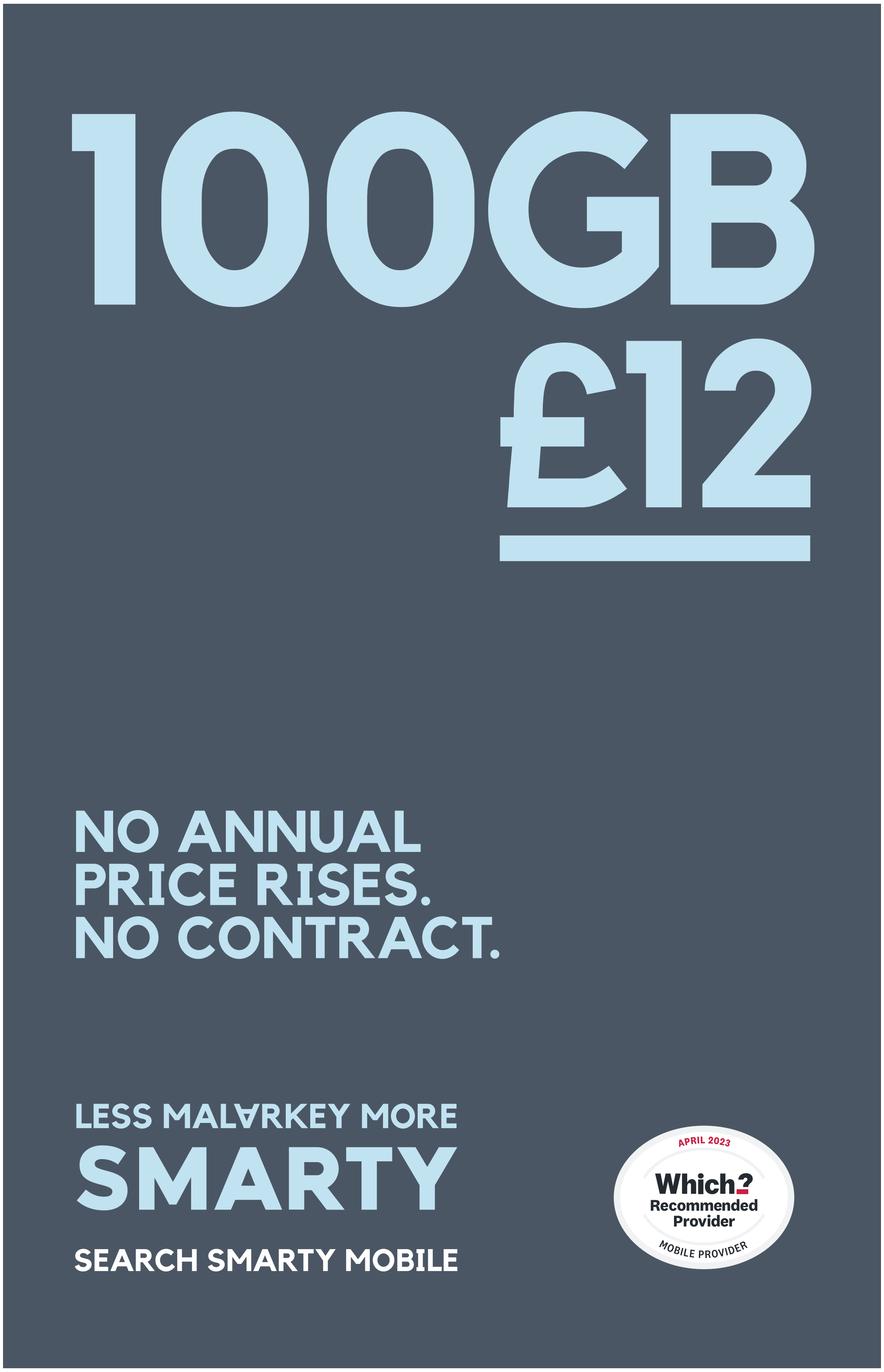
Shah and Sumption will assess whether the national broadcaster is reflecting a wide range of views on the subject of immigration and to what extent coverage of migration is impartial "given audiences' views and what is known about the history, distribution and impacts of migration".

They will also consider "whether the effects of migration on different UK communities are fairly covered" and whether "the impact of migration on the UK economy, including public services, the labour market and the public finances, is covered accurately and fairly".

There will be particular focus on how the BBC covers the issue of boats crossing the Channel; the admission of refugees fleeing Ukraine following the Russian invasion; the impact of migration on communities in the UK; the government's policy on sending some asylum seekers to Rwanda; and coverage of public announcements about migration.

Shah recently sat on the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, set up by Boris Johnson's government to investigate racism in British society. It faced substantial controversy, with critics suggesting the final report played down the role of structural racism in modern British society.

Shah has said the report's intention was to suggest that "class, poverty, family circumstance and geography" played as much of a role in life outcomes as race.



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# 'Completely insane'
## Tories rebel over Sunak's new immigration targets

**Ben Quinn**
**Rowena Mason**

Rishi Sunak's change of government targets on immigration has prompted discontent among restless Tory backbenchers, with some seeking a meeting with the home secretary, Suella Braverman.

It comes after the prime minister set a new goal of bringing immigration down below the level he "inherited", which was about 500,000 net arrivals a year when he took office.

Sunak redefined his immigration target while in Japan for the G7 meeting, after earlier in the week backing away from the Conservatives' 2019 manifesto promise to reduce it below its previous level of about 220,000.

Adam Holloway, Conservative MP for Gravesham, Kent, said the party's electoral prospects are "shattered" by the migration figures of recent years and said he would be seeking a meeting with Braverman.

Asked by the former Brexit party leader Nigel Farage on GB News why backbench MPs were not raising their voices, Holloway replied: "I would go further, it's completely insane.

"Who would think a Conservative government was presiding over effectively uncontrolled immigration?

"I know that at least a group of us are asking to see the home secretary next week, because it's not just about the Tory party's electoral prospects that are shattered by this," he told Farage.

Another MP told the Guardian that they expected it to be raised at next week's meeting of the 1922 Committee of backbench MPs.

"It's already popping up on the WhatsApp groups, and people will be raising it with ministers, I'll put it like that," they said. "Essentially, a lot of people voted Conservative on the back of promise to bring numbers down below 200,000 and I don't think they are going to be hugely pleased if we are now saying we have a vague intention to bring it down to half a million. That attitude of shrugging one's shoulders and saying 'Well, I have inherited it' is just not going to cut it. Voters don't see party pledges as sort of corporate statements."


▲ *MPs have requested meetings with Suella Braverman over PM's targets*

Asked by political journalists in Westminster yesterday if the prime minister had spoken to his home secretary in advance of making his comments about immigration figures, a spokesperson for Sunak said they worked "incredibly closely" on immigration policy.

The No 10 spokesperson added that the prime minister would not "put a number" on his ambition to bring overall migration down but that he would "take stock" of official net migration figures due to be released later this month.

Other Conservative backbenchers were waiting for the latest figures to come out after data in November showed net immigration was 500,000 for the year to June 2022.

Experts believe net immigration figures for this year could come in at between 600,000 and 1 million, prompting a backlash among Conservative backbenchers.

Speaking to broadcasters at the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Sunak said he was "crystal clear" he wanted to reduce immigration, but when pressed on how far, he said: "I'm not going to put a precise figure on it but I do want to bring them down."

The development comes amid signs his home secretary was becoming frustrated, with the Times reporting that measures she had put forward on immigration had been blocked by cabinet colleagues.

In an intervention that was seen as a rebuff to cabinet colleagues calling for an easing of visa rules to boost economic growth, she said in a speech that there was no good reason to bring in overseas workers to compensate for shortages in the haulage, butchering or farming industries.

"We need to get overall immigration numbers down. And we mustn't forget how to do things for ourselves," she told the recent National Conservatism conference in an address that was seen as part of a thinly veiled future leadership bid.

# Britain has moved on from judging people for being rich, says Sunak

**Rowena Mason** *Hiroshima*
**Aletha Adu**

Rishi Sunak has said he is "not bothered" by Labour's criticism of his wealthy family's tax arrangements and thinks the UK has "moved beyond" judging people on their money, as a new estimate said the UK prime minister's fortune had fallen to around £500m.

Sunak, who is the wealthiest British prime minister ever on account of his wife's shareholdings, said he did not pay attention to Labour's personal attacks on his finances.

The new Sunday Times rich list estimated his family's wealth had dropped by £200m in the past year because of a fall in the price of his wife's shareholding. It said Sunak, a former hedge fund manager, and his wife, Akshata Murty, had an estimated worth of about £529m, a fall from £730m in 2022.

Murty owns a small stake in Infosys, a $64bn (£52bn) Indian IT firm co-founded by her billionaire father. The value of that stake has fallen, driving the drop in the couple's fortunes.

However, Sunak said people were not bothered by his wealth when reporters asked him if he gets upset by personal attacks on his family, such as Keir Starmer criticising him at prime minister's questions for his wife's non-dom tax status.

Labour has also accused Sunak of being out of touch with ordinary people because of his family wealth. One attack advert asks: "Do you think it's right to raise taxes for working people when your family has benefited from a tax loophole? Rishi Sunak does."

Speaking on the plane to the G7 summit in Japan, Sunak said: "I haven't really actually focused on it or seen all of it. The bits at PMQs I probably hear but the rest of it I don't. These things generally don't worry me. I don't think most people sitting at home actually are much bothered about these things either.

> *'What [people] care about is what I am doing to make their lives better'*
>
> **Rishi Sunak**
> *Prime minister*

"What they care about is what am I doing for them to make their lives better. As I talked a lot about last summer, I think we've moved beyond judging people by what's in their bank account." He added: "These things don't bother me."

Murty was at the centre of a political storm last year after it emerged she had potentially avoided up to £20m in UK tax by being non-domiciled, and paid £30,000 a year to keep the status.

With Sunak's position under increasing threat, Murty bowed to pressure to say she would pay UK taxes on all income in future. She said she realised many people felt her tax arrangements were not "compatible with my husband's job as chancellor". She added that she appreciated the "British sense of fairness".

The couple first entered the Sunday Times rich list last year when Sunak was chancellor in Boris Johnson's government, making him the first frontline politician to be named in the annual ranking since its inception in 1989.

When asked during the Tory leadership contest in August how he could relate to the public during a cost of living crisis, given that he was richer than the queen, Sunak said people should not hold his wealth against him. "I think in our country, we judge people not by their bank account, we judge them by their character and their actions.

"And yes, I'm really fortunate to be in the situation I'm in now, but I wasn't born like this," Sunak told a leadership hustings event in Darlington.

**Who's in the UK rich list?** *Page 47*→

## No longer on the table? Anatomy of a cheese sandwich

**Michael Goodier**



In 2012 it was the "pasty tax" that caused George Osborne to U-turn on a budget pledge. Two years later a bacon sandwich dealt a blow to Ed Miliband's ultimately doomed bid for No 10. So when Ann Widdecombe, a seasoned political campaigner, became embroiled in a row over a cheese sandwich this week, she should have been more familiar with what is now an established rule: keep politics off the lunch table.

More than half of us are worried about the rising cost of eating, as food prices are rising at their fastest rate since 1977.

But that did not stop Widdecombe landing herself in a pickle on Tuesday by suggesting that people who could not afford cheese sandwiches should simply forgo them.

Reacting to BBC analysis that the price of a cheese sandwich had risen more than a third in a year, the former Tory minister said people should not have cheese sandwiches if they could not afford the ingredients.

So how has the lunchtime staple changed with inflation? The Guardian has analysed figures from the retail research firm Assosia - which tracks prices across the big four supermarkets - as well as official inflation data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to find out how much four forms of cheese sandwich have been affected.

**The no-nonsense snack (up 23%)**
The bread and butter of cheese sandwiches - in this case, literally: two slices of own-brand white bread, cheddar cheese and butter - is much more expensive than it was just a year ago.

Assosia figures puts the cost of one sandwich at 40p - up 23% from last May (separate ONS figures show an inflation rate of 35% in the year to March, suggesting inflation could be starting to fall).

Rising prices have hit dairy products hard. They are relatively energy-intensive to produce, and farmers have seen rising costs for animal feed and fertiliser thanks to rising energy prices caused by the war in Ukraine. Last summer's drought also dried up grazing land, which further increased prices.

Milk has historically been sold with very low profit margins, meaning rising costs for producers pass directly on to consumers. Cheddar cheese - which requires lengthy chilling - is further affected by surging energy costs.




▲ *Inflation means an Italian style caprese sandwich is 38.3% dearer than last year and a ploughman's, left, is up 17%, or as Ann Widdecombe, below, might say 'hard cheese'*
PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY



**The ploughman's (up 17%)**
Upgrading to a ploughman's (we opted for red leicester, butter and Branston pickle in Hovis medium white bread) will set you back 52p - 17% more than in May last year, when it cost 45p.

The average price of bread has rocketed, due to rises in grain, domestic energy and fertiliser prices. Other ingredients are also on the rise: Assosia figures show own-brand red leicester is up 25.2%, unsalted butter up 5% and Branston pickle is 10.6% more expensive than last year.

**The Italian (up 38.3%)**
For a classic Italian caprese sandwich held by two slices of seeded bread, brushed with olive oil and filled with sliced mozzarella, tomato, and basil: you can expect to pay 92p - up a whopping 38.3% since last year.

Added to pricier basic ingredients, own-brand extra virgin olive oil has seen dramatic price rises of 55.6%. Spain - a key grower - produced half its normal quantity in the past year.

The rise in tomato prices - own-brand salad tomatoes are up 25.9% according to Assosia - follows on from salad shortages earlier this year (which led the minister with responsibility for food, Thérèse Coffey, to advise British people to "cherish" turnips).

**The brie baguette (up 19.2%)**
Widdecombe's cheese comment led the presenter Vanessa Feltz to compare her to Marie Antoinette; but had her inspiration been the French queen, the advice might have been to bite on a brie and cranberry baguette instead. That would have cost 89p last year - rising 19.2% to £1.06 this year.

The big driver here is the cranberry sauce, the price of which has skyrocketed due to falling cranberry production. Meanwhile, own-brand brie is up 29.9%.

# Death threats, Grenfell and terror attacks left me with PTSD, says London mayor

**Peter Walker**
**Simon Hattenstone**

Sadiq Khan says he has been left with mental trauma due to a combination of the regular death threats he receives as London mayor, as well as dealing with the aftermath of disasters and terror attacks.

In an interview with the Guardian, Khan described it as a "cumulative" type of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), while emphasising that he was not equating it to the PTSD endured by refugees or people who had faced similar experiences.

Khan, who will seek a third term as mayor next year, also set out the toll that the Covid pandemic had placed on his mental health, saying he "lost my mojo" during lockdown.

"I didn't have clarity of thinking. I wasn't so sparky. I wasn't inspiring my team," he said.

Such is the level of threat against Khan since he became mayor in 2016, all the more so after being attacked on Twitter by Donald Trump, he described his round-the-clock security as being "the same level of protection the prime minister and the king receive".

He said the threats had affected his mental health, along with dealing with the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire and terror attacks in London. Khan said he had concluded he was experiencing a "cumulative" version of PTSD, saying a doctor had told him this was the case.

"By the way, I'm not comparing what I am going through to some of the stuff people go through – as a lawyer my clients with PTSD were asylum seekers and refugees," he said. "I would never give equivalence to what I am going through. Nor would I ever want people to feel sorry for me. I'm very privileged to do the job I do."



▲ *Sadiq Khan will seek a third term as the mayor of London next year*

Khan also talked about the housing shortage, and said that due to London's lack of reasonably priced housing, his grown-up daughters were still living at home.

Khan, who has prioritised the construction of affordable homes, said: "If I was speaking to you 20 years ago, I'd be saying … I'm worried about cleaners and bus drivers not being able to live in London. Now it's nurses, doctors, teachers."

He added: "My children have finished their degrees and are living at home. By 2030, one in three 30-year-olds will still be living with their mum and dad. I love my kids but I want them to leave at some stage, right? So we've got to fix the housing crisis. I was 24 when I bought my first home. That's unthinkable now."

Saying that his ultimate ambition would be to serve six terms, Khan explained that this would allow him to create a city "that can have our children feeling they have a future rather than being worried about what the future holds".

*Interview* **Saturday magazine** →

# Nato Wallace is respected, says Sunak in early play for top job

**Rowena Mason**
*Hiroshima*

Rishi Sunak has talked up Ben Wallace in his effort to become the next Nato secretary general, after the defence secretary confirmed his interest in the job.

The prime minister praised Wallace as "widely respected" among his international counterparts when asked about his cabinet minister touting himself to succeed Jens Stoltenberg next year.

Wallace has long been tipped as a contender owing to his role in supporting Ukraine after Russia's invasion, despite the job of secretary general often going to more senior politicians such as former prime ministers.

The defence secretary has never previously said outright that he would like the job but told the German news agency dpa on Thursday: "I've always said it would be a good job. That's a job I'd like but I'm also loving the job I do now." He said secretary general of the transatlantic alliance "is a fantastic job and Nato is an incredibly important part of all our securities".

He added: "But it's not for me to decide. It's for all the other allies."

Asked by ITV whether he would support Wallace, the prime minister did not give his formal backing but said he knew the defence secretary was "widely respected by his peers for the role that he has played".

Sunak added: "He's focused right now on supporting Ukraine. He's doing a great job of that."

Stoltenberg has led the alliance for nearly a decade and will not seek another term.

The job of secretary general is usually decided behind the scenes.

The US has yet to indicate its preferred candidate but there have been reports that France would prefer someone from the EU.

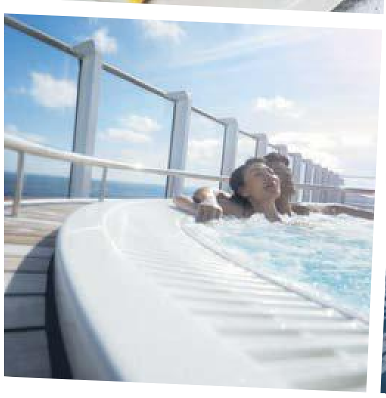
Some other possible contenders include Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister; Chrystia Freeland, the deputy prime minister of Canada; and Kaja Kallas, Estonia's prime minister.

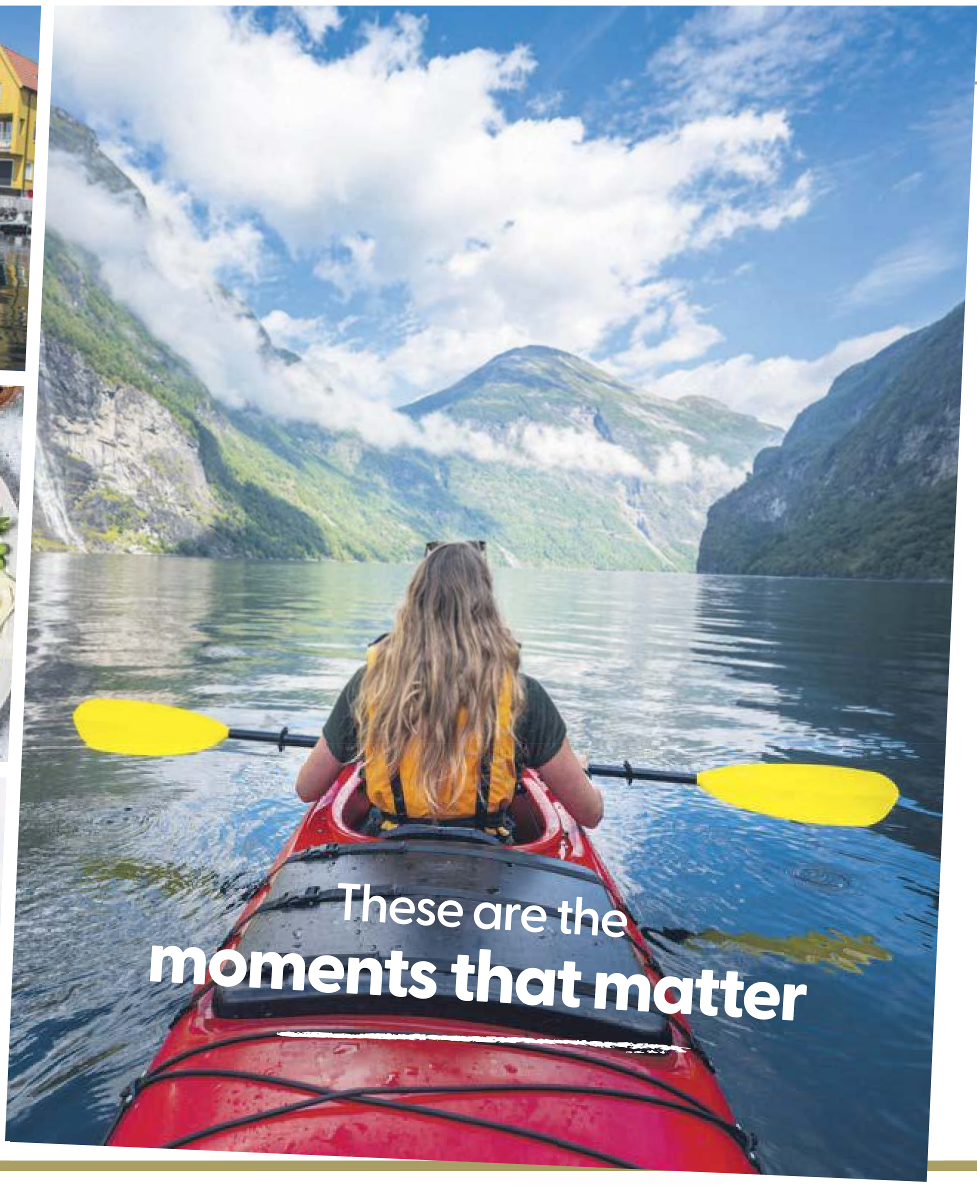
If Wallace were to get the job, it would trigger a byelection in his seat of Wyre and Preston North.

This would be a headache for the prime minister but would probably be more than compensated for by the increase in the UK's clout on the international stage.








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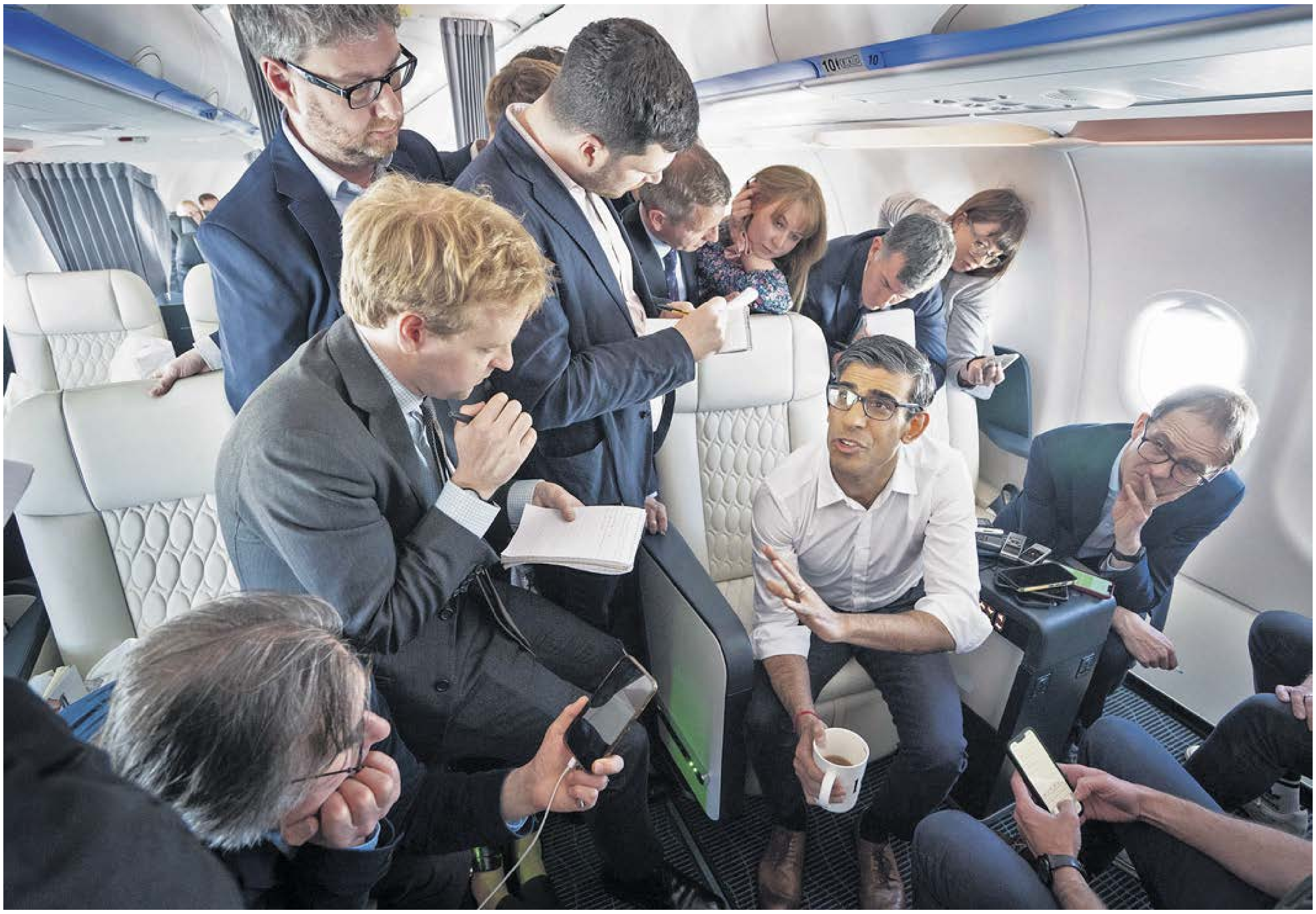
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▼ *Rishi Sunak talks to reporters onboard his flight to Japan for the G7 summit, which began yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAN ROUSSEAU/GETTY IMAGES



# How do you solve the Brexit problem?

# Tories and Labour stuck for an answer

**Kiran Stacey**
**Rowena Mason**
**Ben Quinn**

Rishi Sunak cut a relaxed figure as he sat in shirtsleeves, clutching a Downing Street mug while chatting to journalists on the flight to the G7 conference in Japan this week.

One question ruffled his smooth demeanour, though: what did he make of Nigel Farage's eye-opening comments the previous evening.

Brexit, Farage said, had "failed". Britain had "not actually benefited … economically" from leaving the EU, he conceded.

And who was to blame for this sorry state of affairs?

"Useless" Tory governments.

Sunak bristled at these remarks. "I voted for Brexit, I believe in Brexit … as chancellor and prime minister I am actually delivering the benefits of Brexit as opposed to talking about it."

Sunak had reason to feel sensitive. More serious than Farage's jibes was what prompted them: a warning by the carmaker Stellantis that it would close manufacturing operations in the UK if the government did not renegotiate its trade deal with the EU. Stellantis - which was quickly followed by other carmakers including Jaguar Land Rover and Ford - said it would not be able to comply with incoming rules that would raise the proportion of car parts that must to be sourced in the UK and EU from 40% to 45% to avoid 10% tariffs because most electric vehicle batteries were still made in China.

If the change to these so-called "rules of origin" was not delayed, Stellantis would pull some of its manufacturing out of the UK.

And the prime minister knew that worse was to come. Next week the Office for National Statistics will publish figures showing another surge in net migration to the UK, which may have hit close to 1 million in 2022.

Given the Tories were elected in 2019 on a promise to bring net immigration down from its level at the time of about 250,000 a year, this would be a major policy failure.

Alastair Campbell, the former Labour media adviser, said: "The public have been seeing the Brexit failure for some time now … It's clearly going even worse than people said it would.

"Despite the propaganda in the rightwing press, people have just wised up to the fact that what was promised has not been delivered and what we were told wouldn't happen has happened."

It is not just remainers such as Campbell who believe Brexit is not working. About 35% of voters now say it was right to leave the EU, with about 55% saying it was wrong.

According to YouGov, only one in five voters now think the Tories are best placed to manage Brexit, with almost the same amount saying Labour would be better - a stark contrast with three years ago, when 40% saying the Tories would be best and just 13% Labour.

Those poll findings were underlined by this month's local election results, in which Labour achieved a bigger swing in leave areas than it did in remain ones.

John Curtice, a professor of politics at Strathclyde University, said: "[This shift] is being driven in part by the views of people who didn't bother to vote in the 2016 referendum, but it is also true now that the loyalty of leave voters is weaker."

> *'People have just wised up to the fact that what was promised has not been delivered'*
>
> **Alastair Campbell**
> *Former Labour adviser*

He added: "Liz Truss not only destroyed the reputation of her party for economic competence, she also added to a tendency towards some movement in relation to Brexit and the regrets of people who were leavers."

The difficulties with Brexit may be becoming clearer to some voters, but the question remains as to what the two main parties are going to do about it.

Keir Starmer insists Labour will not rejoin either the EU or the customs union. But this does leave room for the party to argue for closer relations in a number of different areas, from defence cooperation to science funding.

This week Starmer allowed himself to appear more pro-EU than at any other time in his three-year leadership. First, he suggested EU citizens in the UK should be allowed to vote in general elections, in what would be a massive expansion of the British franchise. He told LBC: "If someone has been here 10, 20, 30 years, contributing to this economy, part of our community, they ought to be able to vote."

Then, asked by Sky News whether warnings from carmakers should prompt a renegotiation of the post-Brexit trade deal, Starmer replied: "Yes, we want a closer trading relationship."

David Lammy, the shadow foreign secretary, told the Guardian Labour was aiming to use the 2025 review of the trading agreement to change some of its terms. "We will use that review to reduce friction for British business, remove unnecessary barriers for trade in services and ensure our world-leading research and development sector can thrive through access to cross-border cooperation," he said.

However, experts say the changes under consideration are unlikely to provide a major boost to the UK's sluggish growth.

Anand Menon, the director of the thinktank UK in a Changing Europe, said: "What Labour is proposing is sensible fiddling around the edges. They might be able to help musicians tour more easily or farmers trade, but it will be pretty trivial in aggregate economic terms."

And even if Starmer's proposals are minor in comparison with the economic problems facing the country, they still have the potential to trigger outrage.

His comments about voting and about trade earned him negative headlines in rightwing newspapers, and were hastily "clarified", either by him or his press office.

No, he had no immediate plans to expand the franchise, he told the Times on Wednesday. And no, his plans to tweak the UK-EU trading arrangements did not amount to full-scale "renegotiation", his press team insisted on Thursday.

For all the problems Brexit is posing for Labour, they are far worse for Sunak and the Tories.

Despite having campaigned to leave the EU, Conservative observers say Sunak is not trusted by leavers who have changed their mind or by those who still think it was the right thing to do.

"The immigration thing is huge, given that a huge part of the vote for Brexit was regaining a sense of control over our borders," said Tim Montgomerie, the founder of the Tory grassroots website ConservativeHome.

"Sunak has steadied the ship, but he doesn't seem to the average Brexiteer as someone who gets why we voted for Brexit. Many don't even believe he really voted for Brexit."

Both party leaders also grasp one more important truth, say their advisers: they both know that even if they wanted a major overhaul in post-Brexit relations with the EU, the 27 member nations are unlikely to agree to it.

"If we win the next election, we will have a lot of things we need to achieve in a short space of time," said one Labour adviser. "There is no way we want to be pitched into protracted negotiations with the EU in the middle of all of that."

Montgomerie said: "Brexit, whether you think it was right or wrong, is safe."

*Additional reporting* **Aletha Adu**

Journal **Jonathan Freedland** *Page 1*

# Huge rise in visits to private GPs amid NHS delays



◀ *More people are turning to private healthcare because of long waits to see a family doctor on the NHS*
PHOTOGRAPH: STURTI/GETTY IMAGES

**Continued** *from page 1*

England who see an NHS family doctor. But it is growing fast as the NHS struggles with a worsening shortage of full-time GPs at a time when demand is on the rise and some doctors are retiring early because they feel burnt out.

The medical insurance firm Axa has seen "a significant spike in demand" for Doctor at Hand, its virtual-only family doctor service. The number of appointments has tripled from 17,000 a month before the Covid pandemic to about 50,000, it said.

Similarly, the number of appointments provided by GPs working for Spire Healthcare, the big private hospital group, jumped from 23,000 in 2021 to 32,900 last year - a 43% rise. "People enjoy the flexibility that private GP services offer, including the ability to book longer appointments at short notice, choose the location and format, or they want to see the same GP with each appointment," said Dr Cathy Cale, the firm's group medical director.

"We believe this heightened demand for private GP services is here to stay, as people prioritise their health and want a service that suits their needs and supports an often busy lifestyle."

Spire's acquisition last December of The Doctors Clinic Group of non-NHS GP surgeries made it one of the biggest operators in that market and increased the number of GPs it employs to 128, up from 80 in 2020. It spent £12m on the deal because of an ongoing "significant" rise in patients wanting to see a GP face-to-face.

Hare said the boom "should come as no surprise. The issues within NHS primary care are well known - there's a shortage of 4,000 NHS GPs and difficulty accessing appointments. These challenges will take time to resolve, and the situation may even worsen, so we would expect to see continued demand for private GPs, and the market could grow significantly."

**32,900**
*The number of GP appointments provided by Spire Healthcare last year, a rise of 43% since 2021*

Private GPs' drive to attract customers is helped by the fact that they can refer a patient on to the NHS for any follow-up care, such as a scan or to see a hospital specialist.

Allan Johnson, the chief executive of The London General Practice, said the quality of its service justified its high prices. "We are proud of the personalised service and high-quality care that we provide, which goes above and beyond what other providers offer, including: access to 30-minute same-day appointments; a medical personal assistant who can arrange access to onward diagnostics or consultant appointments; [and] a 24/7 visiting service.

"Understandably the ability to offer this level of care and service comes with higher costs."

David Rowland, the director of the Centre for Health and the Public Interest thinktank, warned that the system increased the risk of the NHS being reduced to a "two-tier health system", with those who could afford to do so going private.

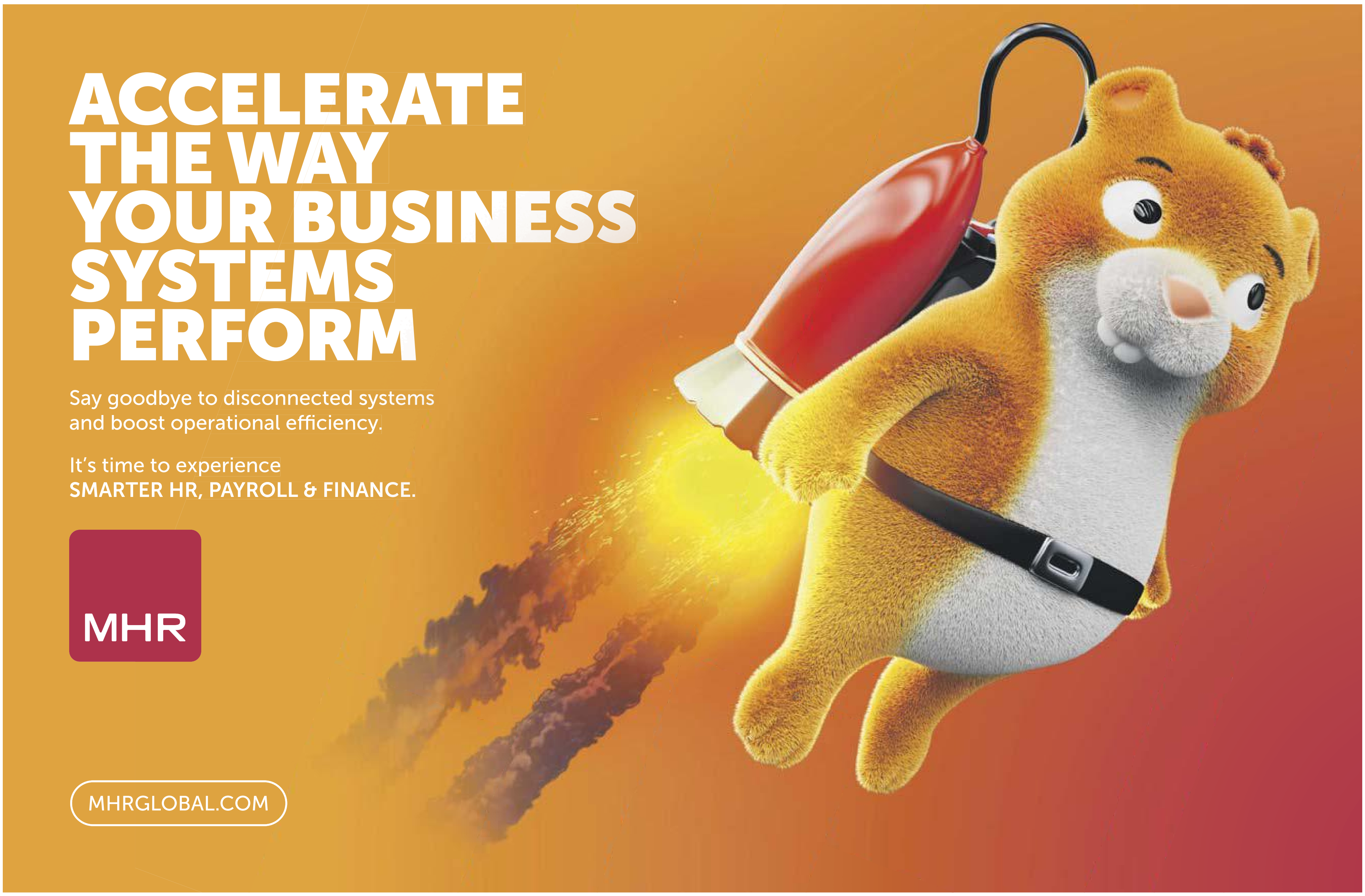
"In addition, the growth in private GP practices poses a further challenge to the NHS because they are likely to be staffed by those GPs who are either exhausted from working within the NHS or are newly qualified doctors who are dissuaded from working for the NHS because it has been so badly funded by government over the last decade," added Rowland.

"This has the potential to create a downward spiral whereby the NHS loses GPs, which makes primary care worse, which then causes more GPs to opt out and more middle-class patients to turn to private options."

Prof Martin Marshall, the recent ex-chair of the Royal College of GPs, said last year that NHS GP services could go the same way as NHS dentistry, with dissatisfaction prompting richer patients to go private. NHS patient satisfaction is at a record low, with unhappiness most acute at waiting times for GP and hospital care.

Prof Kamila Hawthorne, the current RCGP chair, said she didn't "feel particularly threatened" by the expansion of private GP services. For some people "it can be a useful add-on", because of access at weekends and before the working day began.

"The vast majority of people would probably not go privately to see a GP. They would still go to their own family doctor rather than going privately. But of course there are people who can afford to and who do," she said.



# Warning about privatised water kept secret for over 20 years

**Sandra Laville**

Ministers were warned about the dangers of private equity taking over the water industry in a briefing that has been kept secret for 20 years, the Guardian can reveal.

Details of the analysis are still being withheld as sewage pollution and the failure of water companies to invest in infrastructure are under national scrutiny.

On Thursday, the water industry – after more than three decades running a privatised model – apologised for its failures to properly manage and invest in water, and for the scale of raw sewage discharges that have fuelled huge public anger.

It promised to triple funding in pipes, treatment works and infrastructure over the next decade to £10bn and apologised for polluting beaches and rivers with raw sewage. But all of this will be paid for by increased customer bills.

The report being withheld from publication predicted the state of the privatised water industry today, and warned against private equity being allowed to move into water firms.

It was prepared for the Competition Commission (now the Competition and Markets Authority, CMA) in 2002 and has never been published in full. It should have been released under the 20-year rule last summer, but despite repeated attempts to have it published it is being kept secret.

Today, as private equity dominates ownership of the water sector in England, bringing with it high levels of debt and underinvestment that have lead to sewage pollution, water shortages and leaks, the author of the report has called for full disclosure of his warning two decades ago.

Chris Goodall, who wrote the report for the Competition Commission investigation into a proposed takeover of Southern Water, said: "My real concern was about the financial structure of the proposed deal. In my view the transaction created an entity which would prove impossible to regulate. Large external private equity shareholders would load the company with debt and Ofwat inevitably would lose any regulatory control.

"For example, it would prove extremely difficult to ensure that water companies invested enough in sewage control. This report should be published in full now because it helps to show why the last 20 years of increasing private equity dominance of the water industry has proved so disastrous."

This year, Thames Water's CEO, Sarah Bentley, admitted high levels of pollution in rivers were the result of "decades of underinvestment" by the privatised water company.

New data from the Financial Times shows the 10 biggest water companies more than doubled their dividend payments to shareholders in 2022 to £1.4bn, despite an outcry over sewage pollution in rivers and a failure to invest in infrastructure.

The CMA said the report, written in September 2002, had been passed for publication. But eight months on from the date it should have been published, it has not been released.

The CMA has said it would be exempt from releasing the report under freedom of information laws if a request to do so were submitted. The authority said: "Without wanting to prejudge the outcome of any request you may make under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I wanted to refer you to the exemption at s.22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

"This exemption provides that information intended for future publication is exempt from release provided the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in release."

The economist Dieter Helm has warned that the high levels of debt that the privately owned water companies have leveraged risk the stability of the companies.

Asked by the Guardian why the Goodall report and the full investigation it was part of had not been released under the 20-year rule, the CMA said: "As the statement is now over 20 years old, it has been reviewed by our records management team in line with the above process … however, there are a significant amount of documents which make up this matter which are yet to be reviewed.

"Further, the CMA, consistent with normal processes, will transfer these records with other records which have reached the 20-year mark and which have also been selected for transfer. This process will be completed over the course of this year."

> ***'The report helps to show why the past 20 years of increasing private equity dominance has proved so disastrous'***
>
> **Chris Goodall**
> *Report author*



# Chelsea flower show to feature refugees' crops and a Hindu gay wedding

**Helena Horton**
*Environment reporter*

Diversity at the Chelsea flower show is normally seen in the array of flowers and colours.

But this year organisers have weaved inclusivity into its events like vines through a trellis.

The show is set to feature its first same-sex wedding, a picnic for disadvantaged schoolchildren and a display featuring celebrated female gardeners.

Chelsea flower show has long been a staple of the society calendar, with celebrities and royals appearing among the peonies and roses.

But this year, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is trying to make the show – and horticulture – more inclusive, by putting on special events for children and encouraging gardens with an accessibility theme.

Tieing the knot are garden designer Manoj Malde and his partner Clive. Their wedding is planned for Monday in the garden Malde designed which has a theme of unity and diversity.

Malde said: "It's really important that people know the RHS isn't just about their shows and gardens, it also does a lot in the community – then people will begin to understand that it's not elitist.

"How on earth is anyone going to accuse the RHS of being elitist when they are going to have the first RHS Chelsea wedding between a gay Indian man and a gay Irish man? [The garden designer] James Alexander Sinclair is going to be the celebrant. I'm thrilled. We've had the outfits made in India and I've asked all the ladies in my family to wear saris."

His garden will celebrate his heritage with a colour scheme of orange and pink and he will include marigolds used in Hindu worship and colourful spices will be set out on the table alongside small oil lamps used at festivals and religious ceremonies.

The garden will also feature Asian fruit and vegetables.

In the Great Pavilion the display celebrating female gardeners will mark the show's milestone that, for the first time in its history, more designers are female than male.

RHS director of shows and gardens Helena Pettit said: "It's so important to us that gardening is accessible to everyone, so we are really pleased that this is such a strong theme running throughout this year's show.

"It's an ongoing project which will always need further work, but we have made a concerted effort to make sure RHS Chelsea flower show this year is demonstrably open."

The Choose Love Garden is inspired by refugee migration routes. It will grow crops and herbs eaten by asylum seekers here.

The garden will later be relocated to Good Food Matters in Croydon, a community scheme that provides marginalised groups with space and support to grow and cook their own food. Children are likely to enjoy the School Food Matters Garden, while the Memoria and GreenAcres Transcendence Garden is designed for bereaved people, with tall trees and flowing water.

Pettit said: "A requirement this year is that every garden lives on after the show, whether it be in a hospital, a school or a community space, so thousands will benefit for years to come.

"For too long, gardening has not been as open as it should be to people from all walks of life and we need to tackle this at all levels."



▲ *The School Food Matters display, top. Above, a bloom from Horatio's garden, which creates gardens in NHS spinal injuries centres* PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEVENE/ THE GUARDIAN



▲ *Horatio's garden is influenced by the Sheffield region and its future home will be the city's Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre* PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID LEVENE

# Time to part with Indiana Jones, says emotional Harrison Ford

**Vanessa Thorpe**
*Cannes*

A visibly upset Harrison Ford has spoken of the psychological pain that accompanies an acting career, after the Cannes film festival premiere of his latest - and probably final - outing as Indiana Jones. Many actors, he claimed, felt themselves to be misfits.

"They don't find an easy fit in life," he said, adding "they can be very unhappy if they can't work and they can't work unless they are asked to work."

When asked how he felt about the response of the fans on the streets and the reaction of the audience inside the gala screening, Ford's eyes filled with tears and he found it hard to speak for some seconds. "Indescribable," he eventually said. "I can't even tell you. The welcome is unimaginable and it makes me feel good."

In the early scenes in director James Mangold's new film, Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny, the 80-year-old star appears as his de-aged younger self, but Ford said he did not feel wistful looking at his youthful face.

"That is what I looked like. It is not magic, or CGI, Lucasfilm have hundreds of filmed images of me over the years and this was the result of the scientific mining of the library. But I don't look back and wish I was that guy again. I am real happy with age. I could be dead, after all, and I am still working."

He argued the careful use of digitally regenerated footage posed no artistic problems: "But it is just a trick if it is not supported by the story. It sticks out like a sore thumb if it is not honest."

Emphasising his desire to continue accepting screen roles, Ford said: "I just want to work and tell good stories. Satisfaction comes from the work that we do. There is pain when we disappoint and joy when we are adequate or successful."

So why is he giving up his most defining role? "Isn't it evident?" he said, gesturing at his body. His self-deprecation was swiftly rebutted by one journalist, who thanked Ford for a topless scene in the film, adding: "You are still hot." "Thank you for noticing," replied Ford.

His co-star in this latest instalment is Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who plays his unpredictable English goddaughter, Helena Shaw. The plot pivots on the idea of time travel and Waller-Bridge said that taking her place alongside the character of Indiana Jones on set did feel like time travel. "Particularly, of course, in the scenes where we are actually showing that. It was quite scary."

The "magnitude" of joining a film series with such fame around the world was daunting, she said. "It is only now, here, that I remember what a huge franchise it is. But being part of this gang was so calming."

Learning lines of Doric Greek for a crucial scene alongside Ford had been a struggle, she recalled. "It was incredibly hard to learn." But a compensation was her character's habit of punching people. "I loved the fighting more than I can possibly describe. I don't think I had realised how freeing it is to let go and really throw yourself at someone else," she said.

The villain of the story is played by Mads Mikkelsen, who said he saw the first film when he was 15 and modelled himself on Jones: "There is a charm in the character. He lies, he steals; we want to be like him."

Ford said he had been persuaded to return to the franchise because the new story was good enough to give the character new life - albeit in jaded, battered form. "I wanted to see the weight of life on him," he said.

Fielding a question about the meaning of the word "destiny" in the film's title and plot, Ford said he sympathised with those actors who did not get a big break. "There are so many people with talents who never get to see the light of day … I had to wait for luck to come along. I had the opportunity in that time to learn from my experience, to learn a bit of craft. Because luck will not save the day."



◀ *The British actor Phoebe Waller-Bridge co-stars with Harrison Ford and Mads Mikkelsen in Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*



# Review Blanchett gives it the full wimple in outback saga

**The New Boy**
*Warwick Thornton*
★★★☆☆

**Peter Bradshaw**

Cate Blanchett gives it the full wimple as cantankerous alcoholic nun Sister Eileen in Warwick Thornton's woozily mystical and slightly unfocused drama set in a remote outback Catholic orphanage in 1940s wartime Australia - and really only a period setting would give us the spectacle of Blanchett in the complete picturesque nun outfit, a rarity in the modern age.

Blanchett brings to it a fierce authority born of repressed emotion in the time honoured nuns-on-film manner - although she can't match Kathleen Byron's troubled nun in Powell and Pressburger's Black Narcissus.

It's a watchable and atmospheric picture though for me it didn't have the power of Thornton's earlier works like Sweet Country (2017) or Samson and Delilah (2009).

The setting is an orphanage on which the secular state dumps runaway boys, especially Indigenous Australians, to be instructed in Christianity and christened with an Anglo-Saxon name, until they can be sent off to work at sheep stations. But the senior cleric, one Dom Peter, has died, and Sister Eileen has covered up his death with the complicity of junior nun Sister Mum (Deborah Mailman) and workman George (Wayne Blair) - so that she can run the orphanage as her own personal fiefdom for Christ.

Then she takes delivery of an Indigenous Australian boy, played by newcomer Aswan Reid, and something about this child fills Sister Eileen with a strange indulgence, even awe. He is not christened straight away and left with the name "New Boy". But the New Boy appears to have strange powers and conceives a fascination with the carved-wood statue of the crucified Christ that Sister Eileen has put up in the church: he starts bleeding from his palms. Is there something special about the New Boy - or is Christian colonialist Eileen depriving him of the specialness he already had?

After some robust storytelling at the start, the film drifts into images and moods which perhaps don't deliver as much impact as intended. Cate Blanchett has imperious control of any scene she's in but we don't gain access to her inner life and backstory. A minor film from Thornton.



◀ *Cate Blanchett and Aswan Reid in The New Boy*
PHOTOGRAPH: NEW BOY PRODUCTIONS



◀ *Ethann Isidore, who plays Teddy Kumar in Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny, at the film's photocall in Cannes*
PHOTOGRAPH: DOUG PETERS/EMPICS

# Review Uneasy Holocaust film looks at home life of Nazis

**The Zone of Interest**
*Jonathan Glazer*
★★★★☆

**Peter Bradshaw**

A single, satanic joke burns through the celluloid in Jonathan Glazer's technically brilliant, uneasy Holocaust movie, freely adapted from the novel by Martin Amis. For all its artistry, the film is perhaps not entirely in control of its (intentional) bad taste.

How did the respectable home life of the German people co-exist with imagining and executing the horrors of the genocide? How did such evil flower within what George Steiner called the German world of "silent night, holy night, Gemütlichkeit"?

The film imagines the pure bucolic bliss experienced by the Auschwitz camp commandant Rudolf Höss (Christian Friedel) who with his family lives in a handsomely appointed home with servants just outside the barbed-wire-topped wall. His wife, Hedwig (Sandra Hüller), is thrilled with the Edenic "paradise garden" she has been allowed to supervise.

The Hösses love fishing and bathing in the beautiful lakes and streams of the Polish countryside, although at one stage Höss discovers what appears to be bone fragments and dark particulate matter in the river that has washed downstream from the camp and curtly orders his children out of the water and back home for a wash.

They live in a complete denial in an enclosed world. The children are attended to, the servants instructed, the Nazi wives gossiped with. Meanwhile, the SS officers discuss the most efficient means of mass extermination.

But the horror of what is happening begins to surface in aberrant behaviour: a child sleepwalks and Hedwig's mother is more disturbed by this ménage than she will admit; troubled by the memory of once having worked for a Jewish woman who Hedwig agrees may be in the camp meters from where they are talking.

The film, with its superb score by Mica Levi, has undoubted power but might well revive the debate about conjuring slick movie effects from the horrors of history.

# Depp return Cannes welcome shows French #MeToo split

**Angelique Chrisafis**
*Paris*

When Johnny Depp appeared on the red carpet at Cannes this week it was clear that France was doing more than any other country to rehabilitate the actor after he was dropped by US film studios during two libel trials over alleged domestic abuse.

Feminist groups and more than 100 French actors criticised the film festival, saying Depp's appearance symbolised a much wider problem of the French establishment protecting men who have been accused by women. "We are deeply outraged and refuse to remain silent in the face of the toxic politics espoused by the Cannes film festival," an open letter published in Libération said.

Depp, who at Cannes dismissed allegations against him as "abstract whispers" and said he "no longer needed Hollywood", has anchored his comeback firmly in France. His first film role in three years is a French-speaking part as Louis XV in Jeanne du Barry, and he is seeking funding in France for his next film as a director, a feature set in Paris about the artist Amedeo Modigliani. Depp's suits at Cannes were provided by Dior, which has given him a $20m (£16m) deal to continue advertising Dior Sauvage, pleased that sales of the scent have risen despite the two defamation trials over alleged violent abuse against his ex-wife Amber Heard.

In Paris, billboards and buses were plastered with Depp's face in ads for Jeanne du Barry which opened in France this week but does not yet have a US release date. Depp, who once lived in France and has two children with his previous partner, the French actor Vanessa Paradis, has always said the country "feels like home".

In 2020, a British court ruled that the Sun newspaper did not libel Depp by calling him a "wife beater" because the judge found it was "substantially true" and 12 out of 14 incidents of assault reported by Heard were proved. Depp then sued Heard for libel in the US last year over a Washington Post editorial she had written. Virginia jurors ruled in his favour on three counts, awarding him more than $10m, and against him on one count, awarding Heard $2m.

In Nice, along the coast from Cannes, protesters posted anti-festival signs on walls. One read: "Festival of rapists, misogynists and arseholes." Maïwenn, the director and co-star of Jeanne du Barry, said she had cast Depp before the libel trials. Edwy Plenel, editor-in-chief of the investigative website Mediapart, said he had filed a legal complaint against Maïwenn for spitting on him earlier this year. He told Variety that Maïwenn was "outspokenly anti-#MeToo" and believed she had targeted him because of Mediapart's investigations into sexual assault allegations in the film industry, including against her ex-husband Luc Besson, who denied all allegations against him. Maïwenn told journalists she didn't regret the Plenel incident.

> **'We are deeply outraged and refuse to remain silent'**
>
> **Open letter**
> *Libération*



▲ *Johnny Depp in Cannes with Maïwenn, the director of Jeanne du Barry, in which he plays Louis XV*
PHOTOGRAPH: MATT BARON/BEI/SHUTTERSTOCK

The French actor Ariane Labed and the Franco-British actor Olivia Ross, who wrote an open letter signed by 123 actors warning against a French cinema system supporting abusers, said they had spoken out after hearing accounts from other actors of sexual abuse, bullying and racism in the industry.

Ross said: "France has a reputation as a country which prioritises the auteur and seeks to separate the art from the artist. That has its place but it should not be systematic. We wanted to say we are French and we don't stand by these choices." They also wanted to express support for Adèle Haenel, the star of Portrait of a Lady on Fire, who recently announced she would leave the industry because of its "general complacency" towards sexual predators.

The feminist group Osez le féminisme called for a boycott of Cannes, saying France had a history of supporting men such as Roman Polanski, the Polish-born director who fled the US to France in 1978 after admitting the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl and has been a fugitive from the US justice system ever since, despite repeated attempts to have him extradited.

The group also criticised the French film industry for continuing to work with Gérard Depardieu, who is under investigation for an alleged rape in 2018, which he denies, and was more recently accused of sexually inappropriate behaviour by 13 women, which his lawyers denied.

The group's spokesperson, Ursula Le Menn, said of Depp's presence in Cannes: "We're once again seeing what has happened in the past, namely with Polanski, that this country welcomes with open arms and celebrates men who are accused of being attackers."

## Penn gives striking writers full support

**Sean Penn has expressed his solidarity with the Writers Guild of America, whose members are on strike in a fight for improved wages and working conditions.**

**Speaking in Cannes for his new film, Black Flies, Penn said the guild had his full support as "the industry has been upending the writers and actors and directors for a very, very long time."**

**The WGA strike, which began more than two weeks ago, showed no sign of reaching a resolution as its members hoped to renegotiate contracts in the streaming era. "There are a lot of new concepts being tossed around," Penn added, "including the use of AI. And it**



**just strikes me as a kind of human obscenity for there not to have been any pushback on that."**

**Penn attempted to place blame on the producers, saying "the first thing we should do in these conversations is change the Producers Guild and title them how they behave, which is the Bankers Guild". Catherine Shoard**



Research shows that 5%-7% of people seeing their GP complain about fatigue
PHOTOGRAPH: VIKTORIA KOROBOVA/ GETTY/STOCKPHOTO

# Burnout Britain

# The exhausting effort to tackle the rise in tiredness

Esther Addley

'The thing is, we are seeing so many patients a day now," says Rosalind Adam with a hint of a sigh. But even taking that into account, says the Aberdeen GP, she and her colleagues are dealing with more people than ever reporting extreme tiredness.

Research suggests that 5%-7% of people seeing their family doctor complain about fatigue, says Adam - already an enormous number given the 300m GP appointments in Britain each year - "but we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg" given many patients focus on other complaints first. And that doesn't count those soldiering on at home - or the ever busier GPs having to deal with ever more patients.

Everyone, it seems, is absolutely shattered - and it's doing us no good at all. We know we ought to be exercising and eating well to keep healthy and help us sleep, but, as a survey published this week reveals, one of the main reasons Britons don't live healthier lifestyles is because - oh, the irony - they are too tired.

Tiredness matters. The cost to the UK economy of sleep deprivation is estimated at £40bn a year. The number of Britons too sick to work at all is at a record high, ONS figures published this week reveal, boosted in part by long Covid, which is often characterised by debilitating chronic fatigue. The cost of living crisis means more and more children are turning up at school tired and hungry, with almost nine in 10 teachers saying some of their poorer students are too exhausted to concentrate.

Personally, too, tiredness from lack of sleep can be devastating, notes Lisa Artis, the deputy CEO of The Sleep Charity, which runs the National Sleep Helpline. "Sleep has this huge impact on physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. It impacts on relationships or relationships between partners, it can impact in families, it can impact with friends and colleagues."

What's going on? Part of the difficulty in talking about or measuring the problem is that all tiredness is not the same. A bout of crippling sleeplessness due to acute stress is very different to months of exhaustion from lone parenting small children; neither has much in common with chronic fatigue, which is often unrelieved by rest. And yet, to those experiencing them, all can be devastating.

Extreme tiredness can be a symptom of many conditions including heart disease, head injuries, cancer and depression - which is why you should see your doctor if it doesn't resolve. But in many cases, lifestyle factors are important too, "and we do find that sitting down with somebody and going through things that might be contributing can be really helpful for them," notes Adam.

Yet medically speaking, she says, fatigue is so poorly understood, doctors don't even have an agreed definition. They also have very few options for treating a problem that, for many, will not be solved by a lavender-scented bath or going to bed an hour earlier.

For that reason, Adam is leading a new study with the University of Aberdeen and others into the daily experience of those suffering from fatigue, in the hope it sheds light on the different types of extreme tiredness, and potentially the best ways to address each. "[Our patients] are so keen to gain insight into patterns in their fatigue and what might be causing it."

Identifying a single cause for our collective exhaustion may be impossible, but there are a few unsurprising contributors. Serious mental health problems - often associated with extreme anxiety and sleeplessness - have exploded in adults and children in recent years, with the pandemic and cost of living crisis identified as key factors. Poverty is significant here - people in the poorest areas are more than twice as likely to need mental health services as those in the richest.

There is plenty of anecdotal and scientific evidence, too, of the link between the time spent on screens and increased tiredness. "The chaoticness of our daily lives, and the constant connection we have to technology does mean that we really struggle to decompress at the end of the day," says Artis.

Longer-term changes to the way we live and work also play a part. Recent research by the Resolution Foundation into how we experience work found that while British workers have become more positive about some aspects of their jobs, the proportion saying their work is always or often stressful rose sharply between 1989 (30%) and 2015 (38%). Almost a third say they feel "used up" by the end of the working day, an increase of almost half between 1992 and 2017.



*A daily commute is a good buffer between home and work. Studies have found its ideal length to be 16 minutes*

Could the pandemic-driven changes to working patterns mitigate workplace exhaustion? Researchers at the London School of Economics are examining how hybrid working - which relieves many workers from the need to be in an office five days a week - impacts on wellbeing, tiredness and burnout. Even dispensing with the commute a few days a week could be significant, says Alexandra Kirienko, a PhD researcher.

While some value the commute time as a buffer between home and work, studies have found the ideal duration to be 16 minutes; increasing that by just 20 minutes brings a sharp drop in measurable standards of wellbeing.

As for what to do about our tiredness - in the absence of other significant factors, Artis says, "the advice doesn't change, it's quite boring". Try to eat well, exercise during the daytime, think about your alcohol and caffeine intake and your screen time, think about what helps you to relax. Ask for help if you're struggling. Rest.

"The best tip I can give is, don't overthink sleep. The more you overthink it, the more stressed and anxious you will feel at bedtime. And going to bed should be one of the loveliest things that you do."

# AI-powered propaganda could influence elections, say experts

**Dan Milmo**
**Alex Hern**

Next year's elections in Britain and the US could be marked by a wave of AI-powered disinformation, experts have warned, as generated images, text and deepfake videos go viral at the behest of swarms of AI-powered propaganda bots.

Sam Altman, the CEO of ChatGPT creator OpenAI, told a congressional hearing in Washington this week that the models behind the latest generation of AI technology could manipulate users.

"The general ability of these models to manipulate and persuade, to provide one-on-one interactive disinformation is a significant area of concern," he said.

"Regulation would be quite wise, people need to know if they're talking to an AI, or if content that they're looking at is generated or not. The ability to really model … to predict humans, I think is going to require a combination of companies doing the right thing, regulation and public education."

The prime minister, Rishi Sunak, said on Thursday the UK would lead on limiting the dangers of AI. Concerns over the technology have soared after breakthroughs in generative AI, where tools such as ChatGPT and Midjourney produce convincing text, images and even voice on command.

Where earlier waves of propaganda "bots" relied on simple pre-written messages sent en masse, or buildings of "paid trolls" to engage with other humans, ChatGPT and other technologies raise the prospect of interactive election interference at scale.

An AI trained to repeat talking points about Taiwan, climate breakdown or LGBTQ+ rights could tie up political opponents in fruitless arguments while convincing onlookers – over thousands of different social media accounts at once.



▲ AI-generated images of the pope in a Balenciaga jacket went viral

Prof Michael Wooldridge, the director of foundation AI research at the UK's Alan Turing Institute, said AI-powered disinformation was his main concern about the technology.

"Right now, in terms of my worries for AI, it is number one on the list.

"We have elections coming up in the UK and the US and we know social media is an incredibly powerful conduit for misinformation. But we now know that generative AI can produce disinformation on an industrial scale," he said.

Wooldridge added that chatbots such as ChatGPT can produce "tailored" disinformation targeted at, for instance, a Conservative voter in the home counties, a Labour voter in a metropolitan area, or a Republican supporter in the US midwest.

"It's an afternoon's work for somebody with a bit of programming experience to create fake identities and just start generating these fake news stories," he said.

After fake pictures of Donald Trump being arrested in New York went viral in March, shortly before eye-catching AI-generated images of Pope Francis in a Balenciaga padded jacket spread even further, others expressed concern about generated imagery being used to confuse and misinform.

However, Altman told US Senators, those concerns could be overblown. "For a while people were fooled by Photoshopped images – then quickly developed an understanding images might be Photoshopped."

But as AI capabilities become more and more advanced, there are concerns it will become increasingly difficult to believe anything we encounter online, whether it is misinformation, when a falsehood is spread mistakenly, or disinformation, where a fake narrative is generated and distributed on purpose.



▲ Jon Snow, a park user, said reports of disruption were exaggerated

# Primrose Hill to shut at night after row over disturbances

**Harry Taylor**

There will be no more conversing with the spiritual sun on Primrose Hill for William Blake fans, or anyone else, at weekends, after the Royal Parks announced overnight closure of the north London park.

Whether it should remain open after dark at weekends has divided the community around the park in Camden, after late-night parties on the hill peaked during Covid-19 lockdowns.

The former Channel 4 broadcaster, Jon Snow, has spoken out over plans to close the hill, which provides a panorama of London's skyline, framed by a stone etching featuring lines attributed to Blake: "I have conversed with the spiritual Sun. I saw him on Primrose Hill."

Snow, who lives near the park and walks his dog there, told the Guardian: "I honestly think they have really built themselves a problem, and they are trying to create one which doesn't exist. We are not talking about serious disruption."

Problems began during the first Covid lockdown in 2020. As bars and nightclubs shut, people began to hold parties, with sound systems, fireworks and antisocial behaviour causing sleepless nights for those nearby. The matter was complicated by policing being handed over by the Royal Parks' force to the Met at 11pm, and both suffering with a lack of officers due to cuts.

The Royal Parks installed temporary gates, which were briefly removed then reinstated last year after renewed crime reports. Permanent gates will now be installed and closed from 10pm-6am on Friday to Sunday for seven months of the year.

One neighbourhood group in support of gates put together a petition signed by hundreds that was never open to public scrutiny, and a video was sent to politicians, Royal Parks representatives and police, which was not released to the public either.

The other, opposed to the gates, accused them of lobbying behind closed doors to change access to a public space.

Royal Parks said: "There have been very strong views on both sides of the debate … It is, however, incumbent on the Royal Parks to take a balanced and proportionate decision which it has now done."

# 'A space to dream in' Glasshouse fee prompts resistance

**Libby Brooks**
*Scotland correspondent*

Beneath the vaulting dome of the Kibble Palace, generations of Glaswegians have enjoyed the delights of this dazzling, iron-framed glasshouse that dominates the city's botanic gardens.

The Kibble is a place to meet, get a wee warm-up, watch the world go by. It has been free since it opened to the public in 1873. So plans announced by Glasgow city council to charge an entrance fee – to help plug a £50m gap in the budget left by Scottish government cuts – have been met with implacable opposition by local people.

The actor Tam Dean Burn, who is organising a "soft occupation" of the Kibble every Saturday to challenge the council's decision, says: "We know how important green space is for mental wellbeing, how some people need a warm space, or older people need a place to connect. And it's those who need it most will be hit by the charges."

On any given afternoon, the span of ages and interests visiting the glasshouse is striking: toddlers with grandparents, equally entranced by the pool of darting carp; children chasing through the central display of tree ferns; new lovers and old friends strolling round the sculpture-lined perimeter.



▲ *The Kibble Palace in Glasgow Botanic Gardens has been free to visit since it opened to the public in 1873, but the city council plans to start charging an entry fee to plug a budget gap. Below, children get hands-on in the glasshouse*
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY



The painter Andrew Cranston is lingering by the fish pool. "I feel it's another erosion of civic space," he says. "Everyone needs space to dream in, to stand and stare and not have to spend money."

The council says the proposed fees of £3 for adults and £1.50 for children could raise £185,000 annually, and insists its budget "aimed to protect services and jobs where ever possible and has looked to deal with the funding gap by raising revenue where we can".

"I like how there are all these crazy plants from all over the world," says Duncan Carmichael, 11, who is autistic. His poem about the gardens has been shared by the Keep the Kibble Free campaign as an example of the impact the glasshouse can have on young people. His mother, Vivien Scotson, says: "I'm a registered carer and a single mother so we are limited to free-of-charge activities. He spend hours looking at the fish and I get to see my child calm and happy."

But an entry charge on top of travel costs would turn it into an expensive day out. "It's saying people like us are not welcome in places like this when it's been free for over 100 years. I think a lot of people will take this personally."

# Gut bacteria in young children 'can predict obesity later in life'

**Tobi Thomas**

The gut bacteria of a toddler can predict whether they will be overweight later in life, research suggests.

The study, led by Gaël Toubon from the Université Sorbonne Paris, looked at the data from 512 infants who were part of a study that tracked the lives of 18,000 children born in France.

It tracked the BMI of participants between the ages of two and five. Stool samples of the participants were collected at three-and-a-half years of age, and found a positive association between BMI score at five-years-old and the ratio of two types of gut bacteria (*Firmicutes* to *Bacteroidetes)* directly related to obesity. The more *Bacteroidetes* an individual has, the less likely they are to be obese.

The gut, or gastrointestinal system, is part of the digestive system that runs through the body. It is vital to make sure that all the beneficial nutrients from food are absorbed and used for energy, growth and repair.

The make-up of the gut microbiota, the bacteria within your gut that helps to digest food, grows and changes in the first few months and years of life, and disruption to its development can be associated with various conditions in later life, including inflammatory bowel disease, type 1 diabetes and childhood obesity.

Greater abundances of three categories of bacteria - *Eubacterium hallii group*, *Fusicatenibacter*, and *Eubacterium ventriosum group* - were identified as a risk factor for a higher BMI score.

The findings, presented at the European Congress of Obesity, also identified differences in the bacteria that colonise the gut seen in adults living with obesity, suggesting that changes in the gut microbiota that predispose to adult obesity begin in early childhood.

"The reason these gut bacteria affect weight is because they regulate how much fat we absorb," said Toubon. "Children with a higher ratio of *Firmicutes* to *Bacteroidetes* will absorb more calories and be more likely to gain weight."

He added: "These findings suggest what matters with the gut microbiota is not only a question of which bacteria are involved but also what they are doing."

Researchers also found differences in the bacteria that colonise the gut seen in adults living with obesity, suggesting that changes in the gut microbiota that predispose to adult obesity begin in early childhood.

"The gut microbiota is emerging as an important early-life factor able to influence weight gain in childhood and later life," said Toubon.

"Our findings reveal how an imbalance in distinct bacterial groups may play an important role in the development of obesity. Further research is needed to drill down into the specific bacterial species that influence risk and protection and to better understand when the switch to an obesity favourable gut microbiota may take place, and therefore the right timing for possible interventions."

Gut health has been seen as an important indicator of obesity and wellbeing. Previous studies have shown that the bacteria in human guts differ in lean and obese people.



◀ *Cold water exposure can be effective in boosting the metabolism – but build it up gradually, experts warn*
PHOTOGRAPH: LUIS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

# Alternative ideas Researchers study ways to aid weight loss

**Tobi Thomas**

At the 2023 European Congress on Obesity a range of experts share research on ways to tackle the obesity epidemic.

**Acupuncture**
A Japanese study concluded that ear acupuncture could significantly aid weight loss, with researchers claiming that the method could stimulate nerves and organs that help to control food cravings.

The study involved 81 Japanese men living with obesity aged between 21 and 78, who were given a type of ear acupuncture, while reducing their total food intake by half during three months of treatment. On average, participants lost 4in (10.4%) and 4% of body fat, while Body Mass Index (BMI) decreased by almost three points.

**Cold exposure**
A preliminary study by Dr Mariëtte Boon suggested cold exposure in the morning may be more effective at boosting the metabolism and burning fat than in the evening, though more so for men.

The study looked at 24 adults, both men and women, and participants undertook cold water exposure in the mornings. The results found that for men, cold-induced energy expenditure was higher in the mornings than the evenings. However, for women, whether cold exposure was in the mornings or the evenings made little difference.

Boon suggested starting with cold showers in the morning. "If it's cold showers, I would usually recommend to start with the first time just 20 seconds, and not with the head. The next day 30 seconds, and then build it up to 90 seconds … If you do the ice baths, or the winter swim, also build it up."

**Gastric 'balloons'**
Rather than gastric surgery in which the stomach is made smaller, swallowable balloons have been proven to be an effective treatment.

The gastric balloon is swallowed like a pill, but with a long thin tube attached. Ultrasound determines when it is in place, and it is then filled with water through the tube. The tube then detaches and is pulled back up the throat and out.

The balloon is a temporary measure. After 16 weeks, it bursts in the stomach, the water is released and the balloon itself is excreted.

A study of 181 adults living with obesity included participants receiving the balloon as well as being prescribed the weight loss drug liraglutide. Patients on average lost almost three-quarters (74%) of excess body weight.

# Deaths in A&E departments in England hit 23,000 in 2022, says Labour

**Kiran Stacey**

About 23,000 people died in accident and emergency departments last year, according to an estimate by Labour based on freedom of information requests to every NHS trust in England.

Half of trusts responded to the party's requests and based on that information, it calculated just over 23,000 people had lost their lives - an increase of more than 20% on 2021, and nearly 40% on 2020.

The increase in deaths corresponds with a sharp rise in NHS waiting times, as hospitals struggle with high demand and a lack of resources after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wes Streeting, the shadow health secretary, said: "People turning to the NHS in an emergency should know they will be seen and treated before it's too late. The Conservatives' failure over 13 years to properly staff or reform the NHS has a cost in lives."

Maria Caulfield, the health minister, defended the government's record, saying: "We are delivering a record number of tests, speeding up discharge from hospitals, and cutting waiting lists."

Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, will promise on Monday that if elected next year, Labour will drastically reduce waiting times in A&E, which hit record levels last year.

In 2022, more than 1.5 million people were left waiting in A&E for over four hours, NHS figures show, while nearly 350,000 had to wait longer than 12 hours. Since 2004, the health service has had a target of seeing 95% of patients within four hours, but the target has not been met since 2015.

A study published last year in the Emergency Medicine Journal found that for every 82 patients who had to wait six to eight hours, there was one additional death within the subsequent 30 days.

Labour is promising to increase funding to the NHS if it is elected, using money raised by abolishing non-dom tax status to fund training for 7,500 more doctors and 10,000 more nurses a year.

Starmer will also lay out on Monday how the party plans to reform healthcare to have more patients seen in their local communities rather than having to attend A&E.

Streeting said: "It took 13 years for the Conservatives to break the NHS, it won't be fixed overnight. But it will be the mission of the next Labour government to build an NHS that is there for you when you need it once again."

**20%**
*Increase in deaths in A&E between 2021 and 2022, corresponding with a sharp rise in NHS waiting times*

# Phil and Holly

# Pressure building on king and queen of morning TV



**Daniel Boffey**
*Chief reporter*

The newspaper reporters and TV cameras were out in mass waiting for Schofield. Not on the edges of a red carpet for Phillip, the co-host of ITV's This Morning, but his brother Timothy, 54, arriving at Bristol crown court to be sentenced to 12 years in jail for sexually abusing a teenage boy.

There was no comment yesterday from the television presenter, 61, whose near 40-year career in British television has furnished him almost national treasure status.

He took his usual Friday off from hosting with his "sofa wife" Holly Willoughby.

Schofield had, in a statement following the police IT technician's conviction at Exeter court last month, said that as far as he was concerned he "no longer had a brother".

No mention was made earlier this week of the sentencing hearing, as Schofield and Willoughby had traversed the usual daytime TV smörgåsbord of best supermarket picks, the must-have wedding wear of the season and agony aunt-style advice on dealing with flatulent neighbours.

There had nevertheless been plenty of signs of tension for those with their noses up against the screen, including the body language experts commissioned by some of the country's biggest-selling newspapers to follow every minute of the morning programme. Tension not just in Schofield's usually fluid and authentic chat, but in all his interactions with Willoughby, 42.

For, if anyone in Britain was not aware that this close and longstanding friendship had hit trouble, this week's prime minister's questions in the House of Commons will have surely put that right.

"We all know what's going on with her and her leader," Oliver Dowden, the deputy prime minister standing in for Rishi Sunak, who is abroad, had squawked on Wednesday at his Labour counterpart, Angela Rayner. "It's all lovey dovey on the surface, they turn it on for the cameras, but as soon as they're off, it's a different story. They're at each other's throats. They are the Phil and Holly of British politics." But what has gone wrong? The talk is that terms are so difficult between the two that Schofield may have to leave the show and take his place among a long list of television luminaries who have fallen foul of the tendency of the breakfast format to end in tears.

This fate most famously befell Frank Bough and Selina Scott's partnership, partly due to his penchant for repeatedly telling his co-host about the size of his penis when the cameras stopped rolling.

Unlike in that case, the friendship between Schofield and Willoughby has been genuine. It was Willoughby, with whom Schofield has shared family holidays, whom he picked out for thanks when he came out as gay in 2020, describing her as "so kind and wise - and who has hugged me as I sobbed on her shoulder".

Insiders say that to understand the froideur one must go back to the death of the queen - and Queuegate. The suggestion that Phil and Holly had jumped ahead of the public, including David Beckham, to pay their respects in Westminster Hall ushered in a change whereby viewers were no longer laughing with the breakfast duo as they giggled over the absurdities of life to laughing very much at them. It was damaging to the brand and put them on edge.

Then the news about Schofield's brother broke. It is reported that Willoughby was blindsided by it.



▲ *Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby appeared together this week on ITV's This Morning show*
PHOTOGRAPHS: PIXEL8000

She did not know of the trial until Schofield asked for time off. Both of their publicists declined to comment when approached by the Guardian.

At the trial, the jury heard that Timothy had confided in his brother in September 2021 that he had watched pornography with a teenager who was aged over 16. The criminality then came to light two months later in November 2021 after the depressed victim spoke to two counsellors and disclosed that he had been underage. It would be understandable for Willoughby to be concerned about how the details of the trial might tarnish, however unfairly, the Phil and Holly brand.

***'The public have surely sussed that there's a broken fit between them'***

**Eamonn Holmes**
*TV presenter*

Then there was a statement that again Willoughby was said to have felt came out of the blue, in which Schofield this week emphasised in the Sun his closeness to his co-star and how he had been a support to her during difficult times.

"Holly has always been there for me, through thick and thin," he wrote. "And I've been there for her. The last few weeks haven't been easy for either of us."

The message was clear: we are a team who have always had each other's backs in the past. Willoughby posted on a newsletter for subscribers of her wellbeing brand Wylde Moon: "This week, we are graced with a magnificent New Moon, heralding a period of rejuvenation."

After much scrutiny in the media, Eamonn Holmes, a former This Morning presenter who now works for GB News, was willing to call it: "The public surely have sussed that there's no chemistry, that there's a broken fit between the two of them".

Mark Borkowski, the PR agent who represented Noel Edmonds when his show, Noel's House Party, was in trouble, said he sensed that a "storm in the teacup" was being further stirred by those acting in the interests of those who might wish to replace them - and that this might well be how it ends.

"I think ITV will be protecting the format. They will be very frustrated by it," Borkowski said. "Every crisis is an opportunity for a TV company to rethink and there will be plenty of people who might step into their shoes."

## Schofield's brother jailed for sexually abusing teenage boy

**The brother of the television presenter Phillip Schofield has been jailed for 12 years after being convicted of sexually abusing a vulnerable teenage boy over a three-year period.**

**Timothy Schofield, 54, who was a civilian police worker with the Avon and Somerset force at the time of the abuse, was found guilty of 11 sexual offences involving a child. In his victim personal statement, the complainant said he had felt trapped by Schofield and the "ripples" of his offences continued to caused deep hurt.**

**He said: "Before Tim was arrested, I felt I had no freedom. I often felt panic, stress and fear. I felt like I was trapped in a loop of fear and anxiety of the abuse happening again." But he said there had been little respite: "I feel more**



▲ *Former police worker Timothy Schofield, right, with brother Phillip*

**blunt, I feel more bitter, I feel numb to life. I know I should feel really happy or really sad but I don't have the ability to emotionally react. I feel like I'm watching everything crumble before me … I've had to fake everything for so long."**

**Sentencing him at Bristol crown court, Mrs Justice Cutts told Schofield: "You exploited his innocence for your own sexual gratification." She said the complainant thought he had to do what Schofield wanted because he was worried about his temper.**

**She added: "He felt forced to do what you wanted, trapped and unable to escape … Your actions have had a devastating impact. You thought only of yourself. I have not heard a word of genuine remorse, only self-pity."**

**Schofield shook his head and appeared tearful during the judge's sentencing remarks.**

**He was convicted of two counts of sexual activity with a child, three of causing a child to engage in sexual activity, three of causing a child to watch sexual activity and three of engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child.**
**Steven Morris**

# African folklore Potter's debt to the tales of Brer Rabbit

**Lucy Knight**

Think of Beatrix Potter and you may call to mind her tales of Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddle-Duck and Mrs Tiggy-Winkle. These popular stories with their intricate illustrations have been stalwarts of British children's bookshelves over the past century. Yet they may not be as British as most of us assume.

In an essay for the Conversation, Dr Emily Zobel Marshall has called for wider acknowledgment of the debt Potter owes to the Brer Rabbit stories told by enslaved Africans working on American plantations. The tales, about a cunning rabbit who lives in a briar patch and outwits larger animals, can be traced back to pre-colonial Africa, according to Zobel Marshall, a reader in postcolonial literature at Leeds Beckett University. They were then shared among enslaved people before being adapted for white audiences in the late 19th century by the American journalist and folklorist Joel Chandler Harris.

The Uncle Remus stories, as they became known, thanks to the name of Harris's fictional African American narrator, were familiar to Potter. Linda Lear's 2008 biography, Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature, notes that while her "first audience was British", her work was strongly influenced by Harris – "whose Brer Rabbit stories she had loved as a child".

Copies of Harris's Brer Rabbit folktales were found at Potter's home in the Lake District after she died in 1943. "These stories had not been published in the UK when Potter was a child. It is therefore likely that her early contact with the Brer Rabbit tales was a result of her family roots in the cotton industry," Zobel Marshall wrote.

Potter's grandfather, Edmund Potter, was a Manchester cotton mill owner whose wealth was inherited by Beatrix's father, Rupert, a lawyer and photographer.

▼ *The themes in Beatrix Potter's Tale of Benjamin Bunny are similar to those in Brer Rabbit stories*

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT THRIFT/@NATIONAL TRUST



Rupert married a wealthy heiress, Helen Leech, whose family were also cotton mill owners. By the early 19th century, the raw cotton used in these mills was sourced from the Americas, and Manchester's economic success was deeply connected to the enslavement of African people.

> *'Her contact with Brer Rabbit was a result of her roots in the cotton industry'*
>
> **Dr Emily Zobel Marshall**
> *Leeds Beckett University*



▲ *Brer Possum and Brer Rabbit in a 1895 Joel Chandler Harris book*

"I was amazed to realise how little comment there has been about the many similarities between Potter's tales and the Africa-originated Brer Rabbit folktales," Zobel Marshall said. In fact, as mentioned in Lear's biography, Potter herself acknowledged that her story The Tale of Mr Tod, the sequel to the Tale of Peter Rabbit, contained "imitation of 'Uncle Remus'" in a letter to her publisher.

"Having analysed the plotting, language and characters in her tales, it's clear Potter was more than just inspired by these folktales," Zobel Marshall has noted. "In Some Lady's Garden (1883), for example, Brer Rabbit tricks Miss Janey into letting him into her father's vegetable garden to steal English peas, sparrow grass [asparagus] and goobers [peanuts] by pretending to be a friend of her father, Mr Man, from the big white [master's] house," wrote the academic. "This plot is the main storyline in most of Potter's tales and is directly linked to the need for enslaved people to steal food from their masters to survive."

Before Zobel Marshall's essay and book, American Trickster: Trauma, Tradition and Brer Rabbit, there had only been two detailed pieces of research connecting Potter's tales with Harris's earlier folktales. One was in the children's author John Goldthwaite's 1996 book, The Natural History of Make-Believe, and the other was the literary critic Peter Hollindale's (unpublished) lecture, Uncle Remus and Peter Rabbit, at the Beatrix Potter Society in 2003.

Potter herself "never publicly admitted the source of any inspiration for her drawings, plotlines or protagonists", Zobel Marshall said. Hollindale argued in his lecture this may have been because she "misunderstood her own talent and was afraid of being caught out as a cheat".

Zobel Marshall pointed out it was not necessarily wrong for Potter to have been inspired by the Brer Rabbit stories. "Stories constantly change to suit the needs of their audiences, and this is particularly the case with oral storytelling," she said. Enid Blyton also wrote versions of the Brer Rabbit stories, but unlike Potter, Blyton acknowledged her sources.

"Brer Rabbit needs to be firmly reasserted into our understanding and appreciation of Beatrix Potter's tales," Zobel Marshall said. "For far too long, they have been stealing from his briar patch."

# Carrie and Boris Johnson 'weeks away' from birth of third child

**Kiran Stacey**

Carrie Johnson has announced that she and Boris Johnson are expecting their third child, with the due date weeks away.

Johnson announced she was eight months pregnant in an Instagram post, saying the baby would arrive in "just a few weeks". The couple have two other children: Wilfred, who was born in April 2020, and Romy, who was born in December 2021.

The baby will be at least the eighth child Boris Johnson has fathered, having had four children with his ex-wife Marina Wheeler, and another in 2009 with the arts consultant Helen McIntyre, with whom he had an affair.

Carrie Johnson said in her Instagram post: "I've felt pretty exhausted for much of the last eight months but we can't wait to meet this little one.

"Wilf is v excited about being a big brother again and has been chattering about it nonstop. Don't think Romy has a clue what's coming … She soon will!"

The announcement comes after the couple moved into a £4m house in Oxfordshire, which has nine bedrooms and a moat. Before that they were believed to be living between a London townhouse and a country property in the Cotswolds, provided by the Tory donor Lord Bamford and his wife, at a cost of £13,500 a month.

The pregnancy has coincided with a busy period for the former prime minister, who is still waiting for the outcome of a report into whether he misled the House of Commons over Partygate, but has also been touring the world giving speeches.

He has spoken in the past about his love of fatherhood, telling Sky News in 2021: "It's a lot of work, I'll tell you that much, but I love it, I absolutely love it, and I want you to know I change a lot of nappies."

The couple have endured heartbreak, with Carrie Johnson revealing in 2021 she had a miscarriage at the beginning of that year.

She is now a campaigner for animal rights and environmental protections, but spent many years as a media adviser in the Conservative party, before becoming its head of communications.



▲ *Carrie Johnson said the couple can't wait to meet their third child*

# Armed forces train in Border Force roles as strikes considered

**Rajeev Syal**
*Home affairs editor*

Hundreds of soldiers and sailors are to be trained from Monday to cover striking Border Force guards, as ministers prepare for a potential summer of chaos at ports and airports.

In a move that unions say will diminish security at points of entry to the UK, members of the armed forces will be given five days' training before checking passports at Heathrow, Gatwick and Dover. Once deployed, the temporary staff in uniform will not have the powers to detain suspected drug dealers, terrorists or victims of trafficking, and will instead have to ask a fully trained Border Force staff member to do that.

The training, truncated to five days from the three weeks given to Border Force guards, will begin as two unions consider strike action over pay and conditions.

It follows the deployment of more than 600 soldiers and RAF and Royal Navy staff during strikes over the Christmas period, when military personnel in uniform worked at Gatwick, Heathrow, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow airports.

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and Immigration Service Union (ISU), which both represent Border Force guards, are considering strike action over the summer months. Union leaders have condemned the retraining of the armed forces as a risk to security.

Lucy Moreton, the professional officer at the ISU, said: "The government is wasting yet more public money training military staff who cannot - through no fault of their own - provide even a fraction of the national security cover a border officer can. This to cover strikes which recent experience shows have very limited impact. This is not 'taking back control of our borders'."

The PCS general secretary, Mark Serwotka, said: "Time and again, the military has been clear it has its own job to do and doesn't want to spend time covering for the government's failures."

The ISU ran a ballot for industrial action up to 16 May, the results of which are yet to be disclosed. The PSC union is considering further action.

Labour, which has joined senior army officers in criticising the Sunak government for failing to reverse defence cuts, has demanded that ministers spell out how the army will cope with non-military demands whilst being prepared for increasing threats.

**600**
*Military personnel deployed at UK airports during strikes by Border Force staff in December 2022*

The shadow armed forces minister, Luke Pollard, said: "Our armed forces' role is to defend the nation, not bail out Conservative ministers. The government must explain how our forces will handle these increasing domestic demands at a time when ministers are continuing to cut the size of the army and threats to the UK are increasing."

The army will be deployed under the "military aid to the civil authorities" policy.

A Home Office spokesperson has said: "We are working closely with all UK ports and airports to ensure we have robust plans in place to minimise any delays if strike action goes ahead."

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: "We have received a military aid to the civil authorities request, which is currently under consideration."



▲ *Sarah Snooks as Shiv Roy in TV's Succession, wearing a half-suit*

# Say hello to the half-suit
## The waistcoat is back - but with a twist

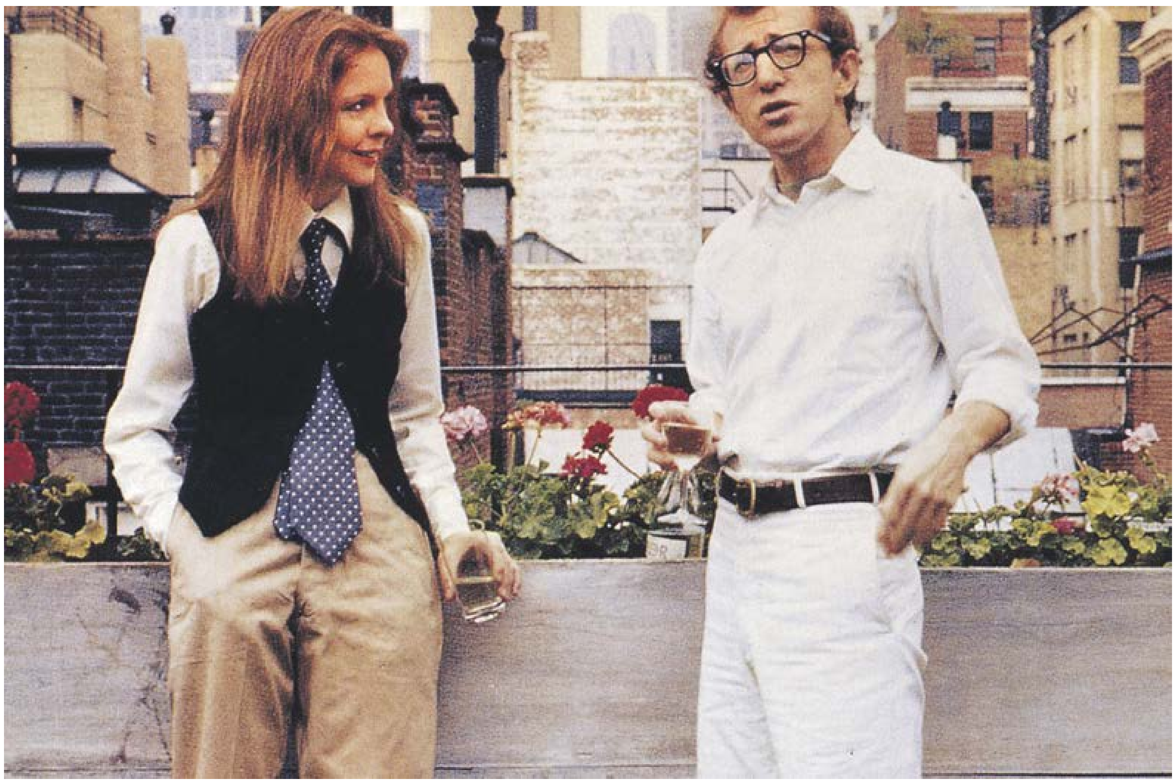
**Chloe Mac Donnell**

Picture a waistcoat, that longstanding fixture of formal attire, and poof! … images of portly magicians straining their buttons are conjured in the mind.

Once a statement of refined dressing, the status of the buttoned vest has been diminished over the decades by illusionists, snooker players and eccentric members of the House of Lords.

But thanks to a new generation of devotees, the waistcoat is enjoying a comeback. The fashion-forward England manager Gareth Southgate led his team to the World Cup semi-finals in 2018 sporting one from M&S and now, thanks to cultural icons such as the singer Taylor Swift and Sarah Snooks's character Shiv from the TV series Succession, sleeveless formalwear is the office look of the summer.

Like Southgate, it is being worn with matching trousers. Dubbed the "half-suit", it ditches the blazer. Unlike Southgate, the look involves a wider trouser leg instead of the traditional tapered style.



Searches at John Lewis are up 300% , while an oatmeal linen waistcoat by M&S has sold out. John Lewis's sherbet pink, moss green and charcoal sets are in high demand online and most sizes from a UK 6 to 18 are also gone.

Part of its appeal, says Virginia Seymour, the director of the British brand Aligne, is a reaction to going casual during the pandemic.

"At the start of 2020 there was a casual loungewear moment," she says. The half-suit sits somewhere between coordinated office wear and something more casual.

"Now people want pieces with more structure," she adds. Aligne's white and black pinstripe matching set is proving most popular. Until recently, the combination of a blazer, trousers and trainers was a well-trodden formula. Swapping the blazer for a waistcoat moves the trend along. "It has a bit more of a girl-meets-boy feel. It shows off a bit more skin," says Seymour.

▲ *Diane Keaton blazes an early trail for the half-suit with Woody Allen in the 1977 film Annie Hall*

▼ *Left, the Stella McCartney show during Paris fashion week in March. Centre, the singer Taylor Swift is half-suited greeting fans in New York'. Right, the actor Elle Fanning follows suit in Hollywood*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY







> ***'It has a bit more of a girl-meets-boy feel about it. It shows off a bit more skin'***
>
> **Virginia Seymour**
> *Director of Aligne*

For more formal meetings, taking a leaf out of Annie Hall's book, the waistcoat tends to be worn over a blouse. Among younger wearers such as the US star Zendaya, it's bare arms.

On Stella McCartney's spring-summer catwalk, models wore neatly fitted waistcoats with low-slung trousers, while for a Hollywood Reporter magazine dinner in March the actor Elle Fanning teamed a grey, cropped waistcoat with billowing trousers.

The British brand Albaray launched a honey-coloured cotton set in February and this month added a black linen version.

Albaray's co-founder Karen Peacock says it is selling more waistcoats as standalone pieces that customers wear with trousers they already own. She says: "Our customers want things they can style in different ways and create different outfits," she says. "Separates allow you to do this."

If this feels like another flash-in-the-pan trend, the fast-fashion site Asos and the luxury e-tailer MatchesFashion suggest otherwise. Expect to see waistcoats paired with shorts for high summer and denim waistcoats with jeans come autumn. Aligne's next editions include matching midi-skirts.

The waistcoat has always been a fixture of menswear. Whether Sarina Wiegman takes Southgate's lead when managing the Lionesses at the Women's World Cup in July seems unlikely. Wiegman went for a white shirt and a black blazer during the Euros. Strictly business.

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# Afghan who worked for UK sleeping rough in London after he fled Kabul

**Amelia Gentleman**

Almost two years since he fled to the UK from Kabul after the Taliban tried to kill him, Mohammad Seddeqi, 32, a former World Bank and UK Department for International Development contract worker, was homeless and sleeping on the streets outside Victoria station in central London.

He was evicted from a Home Office-funded hotel at the start of May and has been unable to find alternative accommodation. Despite being highly educated and fluent in English, he has found the process of building a new life in the UK extremely challenging, and is dismayed by the lack of available support.

When the weather is good, he sleeps between two stone columns on Buckingham Palace Road; when it is raining or cold he moves to a corner of Victoria coach station that is open through the night. During the day he has been using the free wifi and plug sockets in the railway station cafes to charge his phone, so he can continue with his attempt to search for housing and to try to complete an online application to start a law degree this autumn.

Seddeqi's experiences are at the extreme end of a spectrum of difficulties experienced by thousands of Afghan refugees who fled to the UK after the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021.

The government said about 9,000 Afghans had been settled into permanent homes, but another 8,000 remained in hotels because local authorities had been unable to find long-term alternative accommodation. Some have recently been told they face eviction, as the Home Office attempted to reduce the amount it was spending on housing refugees and asylum seekers in hotels.

"It's very noisy during the night; there are a lot of drunk people, and people taking drugs. Sometimes I



◀ *Mohammad Seddeqi, who worked for the Department for International Development, was evicted from hotel funded by the Home Office*
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY HALL/THE GUARDIAN

worry something will happen while I'm asleep - that I will be robbed or attacked," he said.

Seddeqi was not part of the official evacuation scheme and came to Britain by a small boat, arriving in Dover, on 10 August 2021, a few days before the Taliban took power. He was held in an immigration processing centre on the south coast before being sent to a hotel in the London borough of Westminster. His asylum claim was approved and he was granted refugee status last October, and has since been trying to find work and independent accommodation, and apply for university, but he has struggled.

Although Westminster council has a duty to offer help over a 56-day period, Seddeqi said officials had been slow to assign him a caseworker, misdirected him to a letting organisation that only works with older people, and closed his file after the period elapsed, classifying him as a non-priority case and offering only guidance about renting privately.

He has travelled around London looking for a room to rent. "To rent somewhere to live you need a guarantor, you need two months' rent. Most landlords are not willing to rent to people receiving housing benefit, and the rents are impossible," he said.

With the help of jobcentre staff, Seddeqi has had an interview for a job in procurement, the sector in which he worked in Afghanistan, but has yet to be hired. "I've got 12 years' experience in logistics and supply chain management. I was working on UN and USAid-funded projects," he said. He was distraught to have to leave his wife and two young sons, but was determined he could rebuild a life in the UK; some of that optimism has ebbed away. "You feel very lost. Sometimes it feels like the end of life."

He asked for photographs to be taken without revealing his face. "I'd like to have my picture in a British newspaper when I become a barrister or work in politics, not because I'm sleeping in the coach station," he said.

Westminster council said: "The supply of available homes is limited and Mr Seddeqi is not eligible for housing from the council under the current criteria."



# Architecture Biennale
## Venice puts exploitation in spotlight

**Oliver Wainwright**
*Architecture and design critic*

A many-sided brick wall stands in the middle of Venice's Arsenale, like a sharply creased origami screen, blocking the route of visitors to this year's Architecture Biennale. As you get closer, it looks like a rubble tapestry, with pieces of crushed brick and coloured glass emerging from its gnarled surface like great chunks of mineral nougat.

On a wall nearby hang images that explain the origins of this arresting barrier: a reproduction of a 17th-century map of the coasts of Africa and Brazil, a slave-trading ship's logbook, and a piece of woven raffia from the Kingdom of Kongo. The Brazilian-Paraguayan architect Gloria Cabral and the Congolese artist Sammy Baloji have fused these sources to craft a powerful monument to colonial extraction, forced migration and the debris of empire: the rugged aggregate is demolition waste salvaged from Brussels, the imperial Belgian capital partly built on the brutal rape of the Congo.

This sets the tone for one of the most challenging, multilayered biennales yet, which puts Africa in the spotlight for the first time. It is an intentionally difficult show that explores the toxic terrain and social scars that riddle the continent's postcolonial landscapes. It is a welcome wake-up call, spotlighting a kaleidoscope of places and topics that have long been overlooked by mainstream architectural culture - as well as framing familiar topics, such as decarbonisation, in a fresh new light.

"The black body was Europe's first unit of energy," says Lesley Lokko, the Ghanaian-Scottish curator of this 18th edition show, titled The Laboratory of the Future.

The exhibition, opening today until 26 November, is a necessary corrective, with a majority of exhibitors from Africa or the diaspora, a 50/50 gender balance, and an average age of 43 - positively adolescent in the architectural profession. It can be an arduous thing to digest, but rewards patience and close inspection.

There are not many buildings to look at, but plenty of videos, research projects and mixed-media installations that occupy what Lokko calls the "productive edge" of architecture, where it meets the worlds of landscape, ecology, policy, finance, public health, artificial intelligence, heritage, conflict and identity, to name just a few of the topics consumed by her voracious multidisciplinary appetite - some struggle in their translation to an exhibition format.

Resource extraction, both body and mineral, is a recurring theme. It is poetically explored by the Zimbabwe-born designer Thandi Loewenson in a series of carvings, etched into slabs of industrial graphite, which hang on the wall of the central pavilion like a shimmering apparition.

David Adjaye, the Ghanaian-British architect, presents models of his office's current projects, from 100 hospitals in Ghana to the giant (and controversial) national cathedral in Accra. The room comes as a refreshing salve - ah, real buildings at last! - although the slick presentation airbrushes over some of the contested contexts from which these projects emerge.

The format of the biennale is also entertainingly questioned by the Latvian contribution. With the help of AI, they have transformed more than 500 pavilions in the history of the biennale into garishly packaged products, which line the shelves of a mini-mart. Visitors can shop till they drop.

It raises an important question: has the biennale become too bloated? Lokko has been judicious, but the institution itself continues to encroach on the city that hosts it. There are collateral events aplenty this year, including a showcase of Qatari cultural megaprojects and a focus on the controversial Saudi "smart city" of Neom - which, in the light of this year's show, feel like the last gasps of another era.



▲ *Bengali Song by Arinjoy Sen and NiLab. Below, Egypt's pavilion at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale, curated by Lesley Lokko, top left*
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MARCO ZORZANELLO



# King's severs funding ties with Sackler family over opioid scandal

Matthew Weaver

King's College London has become the latest UK institution to sever all ties with the Sackler family following outrage over its role in the deadly opioid epidemic in the US.

Several other UK organisations funded by Sackler cash, including the Royal Opera House, have taken steps to distance themselves from the family in recent weeks.

King's said it planned to change the name of its Sackler Institute on developmental brain disorders because it no longer receives money from the family's charitable foundations.

In 2021 the college accepted £750,000 from the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, which helps fund 22 doctoral research students. It said: "King's College London and the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation have mutually agreed that, as funding has now ended, the research the foundation supported will no longer carry the Sackler name."

Oxford University confirmed this week that it was also ending its funding arrangements with the Sackler family and removing its name from buildings, galleries and positions funded through their donations.

Members of the Sackler family are the owners of Purdue Pharma, which reached a multibillion-dollar bankruptcy settlement over its role in an epidemic that is estimated to have killed more than 500,000 people since 1999. It was accused of aggressively marketing OxyContin and playing down its addictiveness.

The family's other UK-based charity, the Sackler Trust, currently highlights its support for 17 UK organisations on its website. Thirteen have said they have now cut ties with it.

At least three charities – Ballet Black, the Prisoners' Education Trust and the Spitalfield Crypt Trust – have asked the Sackler Trust to remove their names from its website.

Yesterday the Royal Opera House removed from its website the name of Dame Theresa Sackler, a former Purdue board member, who had been listed as a honorary director.




# Police deem dog safe after it bites off finger of woman, 61, in attack

Jessica Murray
*Midlands correspondent*

The family of a woman who had her finger bitten off in a dog attack on the street have said the police's decision to deem the dog safe and return it to its owner is appalling.

Annette Tonyin, 61, was walking her family's dog in south Birmingham at about 8am on 30 April when, according to her account, one of two dogs being walked on the opposite side of the street ran across the road and began to attack the pet.

She said she was knocked to the ground, briefly losing consciousness, and when she came to and attempted to pull the dog off, it bit off part of her left index finger and left her with severe bites on her right hand.

Her family said they were appalled when police said a dog handler had deemed the animal to have a "friendly disposition" and it was returned to its owner. They were also angry it took police more than two weeks from the time of the incident to take a statement from Tonyin.

"I don't understand how they came to the conclusion without seeing my mum and the damage that was done," said the victim's daughter, Folake Adoti-Ryan, adding that with the number of fatal dog attacks rising in recent years, "we shouldn't have to wait for someone to die" before action is taken against dogs.

Tonyin was taken to hospital and the tip of her finger was recovered from the scene, but doctors were unable to reattach it as the middle part of the finger was still missing. "She has been maimed for life, it's a life-changing injury," Adoti-Ryan said.

The family's own dog, a staffie, spaniel and labrador cross named Ebony, suffered internal bleeding and deep cuts to her throat, but made a full recovery. Adoti-Ryan said her mother, who is retired, is now petrified of walking near to where the incident took place in Kings Heath.

A number of police officers attended the scene and the family were told six 999 calls were made by witnesses who helped to pull the attacking dog away and get medical attention for Tonyin.

A spokesperson for West Midlands police said they were continuing to investigate the incident and appealed for any witnesses to come forward.

"Officers from the dangerous dogs unit have conducted an assessment on the [two] dogs to establish if they are a banned breed and to assess their temperament," they said. "Following the assessment, the dogs, who are not a banned breed, have been allowed to stay with their owners with strict conditions."

Adoti-Ryan said when she contacted police to chase up why a statement had not been taken from her mother, she was told the officer had noted he was unable to take her statement over the phone because her accent was "too strong".

"My mum is a fluent English speaker, she has a Nigerian accent but we moved here 30 years ago," she said. "We've had to call them several times, and all the information we've been given is from chasing them."

A police spokesperson said: "Officers have contacted the victim to make arrangements to visit her in person to take a statement so that the investigation can be progressed."

## Man dies after attack

**A Wigan man who died after being attacked by a dog has been named by police as Jonathan Hogg, 37.**

**Officers shot dead the dog after the attack in Leigh, Wigan. Hogg (below) was found by officers with injuries on Thursday. He was taken to hospital but died yesterday. His family said: "Jonathan was a well-loved, sensitive and kind person who will never know how loved and appreciated he was by everyone who knew him."**

**A man, 24, has been arrested on suspicion of being in charge of a dangerously out-of-control dog causing injury resulting in death.**

**Helen Pidd**



Lucy Mangan
Digested week



# Let them eat air – the withering return of Ann Widdecombe

## Monday
A new programme is about to begin on Channel 4, called Open House, in which couples wishing to experiment with open relationships will go and live in a mansion together and see what's what. Or see what-whats. Or whatever.

I would love to take part. To live in a mansion is my greatest dream. Basically, the only ambition I have ever had in life is to live in a house so big I never have to leave home. Want a change of scene? Spend a day or two in the East Wing, then the West, before returning home-home to the middle beautifully refreshed. I'd like a swimming pool but don't need a home cinema. Library, obviously. A sprawling floor each for husband and child so we don't have to see each other except by choice and/or scheduled appointment (nearly 20 years into the whole "family" business and I still find it an outrage that I am expected to interact with them just whenever they see fit). Grounds I can walk in for miles knowing that I won't see another soul.

I shall fast-forward through the boring open relationship parts. Anyone planning to do likewise and with a decent amount of equity – please get in touch. I have a plan.

## Tuesday
It's been a while but Ann Widdecombe returned to the fray on fine form in an interview on the BBC Politics Live programme. Asked what she would say to people who, amid the cost of living crisis, could not afford to pay for basics such as the ingredients for a cheese sandwich, she replied: "Well, then you don't do the cheese sandwich." Then she explained that there's no such thing as a right to low inflation to keep things – such as the daily intake of calories compatible with life – affordable.

It took me right back to the days when she was prisons minister, responsible for keeping pregnant women shackled during labour 'n' all that. I remember feeling sorry for people whose memories didn't stretch back far enough to appreciate her bid for national treasure status via 2010's Strictly Come Dancing for the roiling piece of absurdity and self-delusion it was.

Now she's back with, in essence, "Let them eat air!" Attagirl.

## Wednesday
I pledged to emigrate to Japan a few months ago when I experienced my first heated loo seat (that wonderful country has, I am reliably informed, made such installations de rigueur throughout the land). I was transported to a hitherto undreamed of world of comfort. You could never have persuaded me, absent the actual touch of buttock to pre-warmed lavatory, that it could make such a difference.

Now, I am drawing up the repatriation papers with even greater rapidity as I learn that in Japan they are deploying "smile tutors" to help people relearn how to deploy their maxillofacial muscles properly now that the years-long requirement to wear masks to prevent the spread of Covid has been dropped.

As a lifelong possessor of what is commonly if not entirely decorously known as "resting bitch face" – AKA looking as miserable as sin – this is something that, like the heated toilet seat, I have needed all my life without fully realising it. Imagine, someone who can teach you how to smile! Which is to say, someone who can teach you how to fit more seamlessly into society so that you may go about your business more unobtrusively. Because that is the real point of being able to make yourself look pleasant. Instead of badgering you about what's wrong ("Literally just my face") or urging you to cheer up, it means people leave you alone. Almost as blissful as a warmed bottom.



*Sorry folks. Gotta take this – it's God. No, really. 'S God. Hi, God! How you BIN?!*

PHOTOGRAPHS: ZUMA/SHUTTERSTOCK; @RISHISUNAK



*Volodymyr!*

*Easy, Rishi. Leadership qualities don't literally rub off. It doesn't work like that*

## Thursday
Martha Stewart has posed for the cover of the annual Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition at the age of 81. Is it a sign that ageism is in retreat? That homogeneous beauty standards are on their way out? That experience and wisdom are starting to be prized over youth, stupidity and collagen-rich flesh?

Absolutely not! It is a sign that one preternaturally gorgeous octogenarian woman has been allowed on the front cover of an infamously sexist institution to rebut all the claims that it is or has ever been an infamously sexist institution, despite the photographs being lit, shot and/or doctored so as to make her appear no more than 40 (and a Martha Stewart 40 at that). And a sign that you are only a viable woman if you can still make it on to the cover of Sports Illustrated if you can still give a slice of the demographic the horn into your ninth decade.

## Friday
I was deliberately early for a meeting on Kings Road because Chelsea, that once bohemian enclave of London, always fascinates me. It was always rich (bohemian costs money, otherwise it's just hippy skank and there are no mansion blocks in hippy skankland) but now it is just mooooneeeeyyyyy. Mostly new money, but some of the old, arty stuff clings on. Older couples with cut-glass accents carve their way through the blingy Europeans and astonishing ambulant sets of eyebrows and adventures in facial filler that comprise the bulk of the passersby.

I stopped for a coffee in one of the posher cafes. A slim, coiffed, camel-coated, tan-jumpered, beige-trousered woman was sitting with her handbag placed on the only free chair. "Sorry," I said, gesturing towards it. "Is there anyone coming to sit here? Do you mind if I … ?" She, perfectly agreeably, moved her bag and I sat down. "Have you been here long?" she said. "What country are you from?" I was perplexed. "England?" I said. "I've always lived in London." Now it was her turn to look perplexed. "Then why were you so worried about sitting down?" she said.

As a fellow Englishwoman, was I supposed to feel hers was a kind of handbag of the commons? Even though my hesitation was due to the fact that I am quite common? What about common courtesy? What life had she led that asking permission to intrude on someone's space spurred deep inquiry? What happens when someone who IS foreign does it because they don't know that this is – I presume – a privilege she only extends to the English? Fascinating, you see. Fascinating.

# Review

## Stage version of forbidden love story is perfectly pitched

### Brokeback Mountain
*@sohoplace, London*
★★★★☆

Arifa Akbar

Where Ang Lee transformed Annie Proulx's 35-page short story about two gay cowboys into a feature film in 2005, Ashley Robinson's stage adaptation, all of 90 minutes long, returns it to a distilled purity.

The dialogue, especially at the start, is minimal, and skates on the surface of deeper felt emotions between Ennis (Lucas Hedges) and Jack (Mike Faist), the Wyoming sheepherders who meet, aged 19, and become furtive lovers for the next 20 years.

Nica Burns's new theatre is proving itself as a space in which acoustics are central to the action and Dan Gillespie Sells's country and western songs, led by Eddi Reader's beautiful vocals, build the atmosphere and charge.

In Jonathan Butterell's production, the music becomes its own language, even between the lovers who connect through song. Although there is a conspicuous yee-haa twang to it all, with Tom Pye's costumes and set of scrubland, campfire and Stetsons, it manages not to sink into cliche.

The story begins in 1963 in a state so homophobic it was life-threatening to be openly gay. Hedges and Faist take some time to warm up: they have the look of Abercrombie & Fitch models and the sexual interest is initially delivered in coy glances. The passion never really burns up the stage but their chemistry comes alive as boyish romance, all play fighting and grabbing ardour. It retains an innocence and tenderness all through, even in spite of the dissatisfaction they come to feel, and both actors are compelling – Faist especially so as the ebullient Jack, while Hedges is more melancholic as Ennis, too scared to risk a fuller life with Jack, and full of regret for it.



▲ *Mike Faist as Jack, left, and Lucas Hedges as Ennis in the new play*

Staged as a memory play, it features an older Ennis (Paul Hickey), as grizzled as at the start of Proulx's story. This is the only dud note – too evidently a device.

Ennis's wife, Alma (Emily Fairn), captures the impact of closeted male homosexuality on the women caught within its doubleness. "I'm not no queer," says Ennis, and we see how the denials are necessary for survival. Yet we can't consign their story to the past when the "don't say gay" bill is gaining traction in the US. The ending is stark, their unlived lives, unspent passions, desolately evoked.

*Until 12 August*

# Eyewitnessed
# Pictures of the week

▶ *Palestinians stage a 'flag march' protest along the border east of Gaza City in response to Israel's annual Jerusalem Day march*
MOHAMMED ABED/ AFP/GETTY IMAGES







▲ *A poppy field in the French department of Isère, where the lack of pesticides has enabled this exuberant growth*
KONRAD K/SIPA/ SHUTTERSTOCK

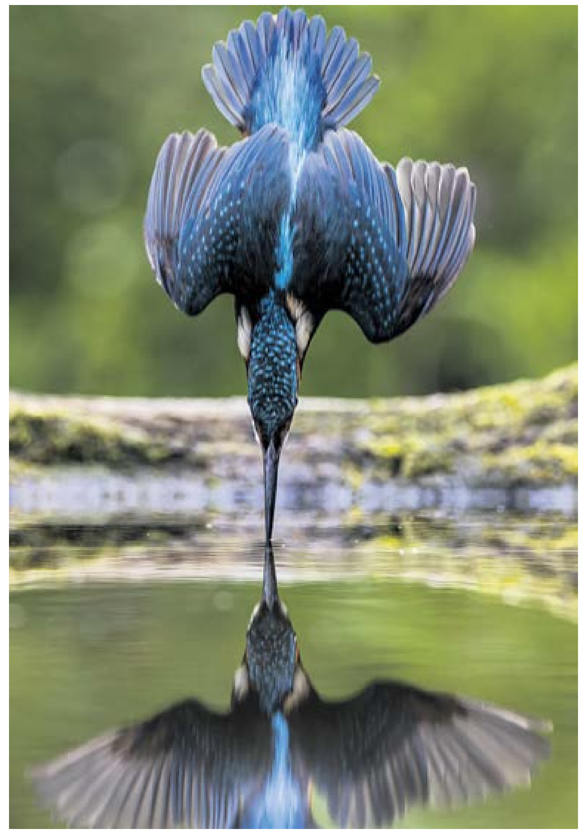




◀ *Volodymyr Zelenskiy meets Rishi Sunak at Chequers during the Ukrainian president's trip to the UK*
SIMON DAWSON/ 10 DOWNING STREET



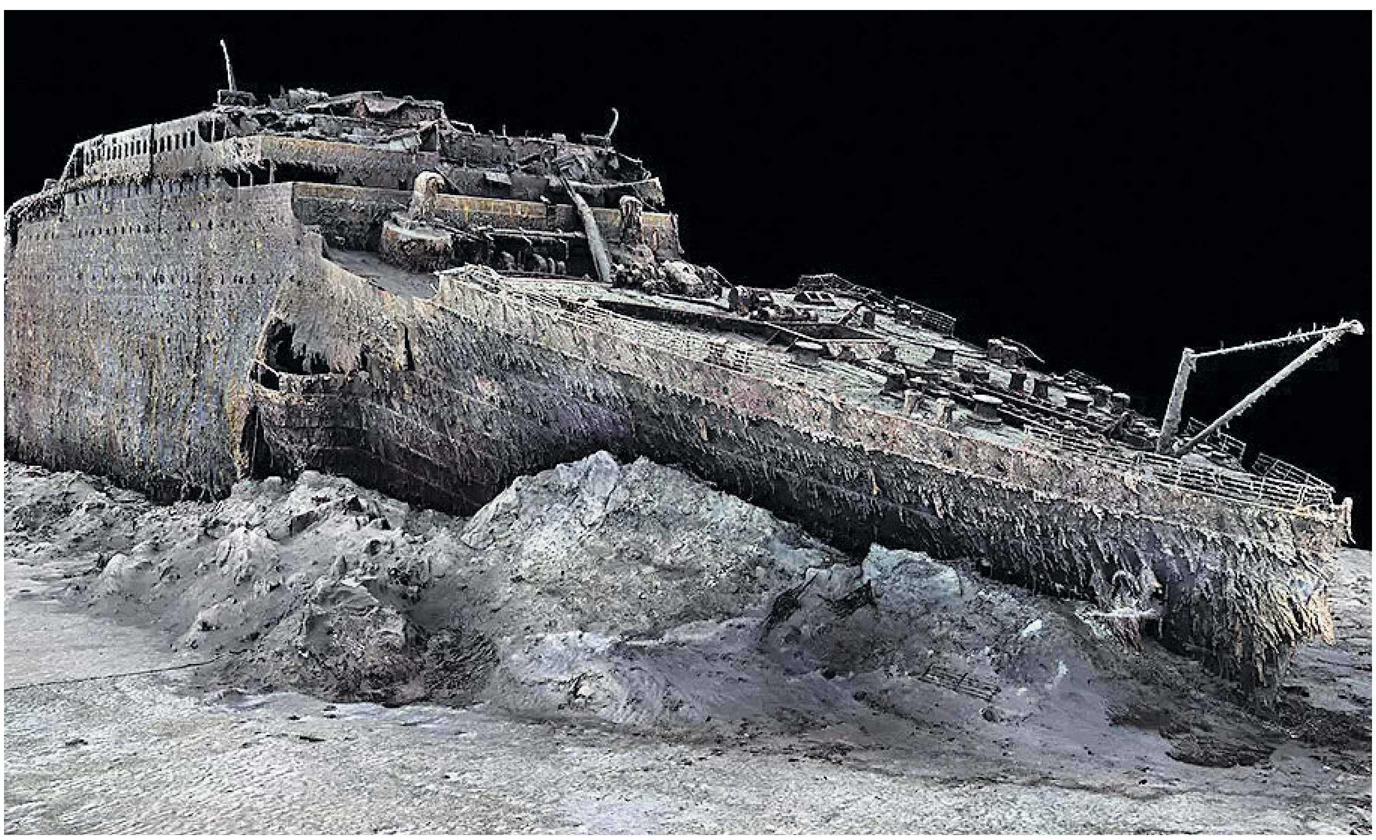
◀ Damian Lewis and Kate Winslet greet each other backstage at the 2023 Bafta TV awards at the Royal Festival Hall in London
PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH LEE/THE GUARDIAN



▲ A kingfisher is captured, mid-plunge and perfectly reflected, as it dives headfirst into the water at Droitwich, Worcestershire
ADAM FERRY/ MEDIA DRUM IMAGES



▲ Eurovision fans enjoy the atmosphere after gathering in Liverpool to watch the final, won by Sweden
CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY



◀ The first full-sized digital scan of the Titanic has been created using deep-sea mapping, giving a 3D view of the entire ship
MAGELLAN/ATLANTIC PRODUCTIONS

# Environment



▲ *The movement of Asiatic lions to the coast is due in part to limited space in their traditional habitats* PHOTOGRAPH: KARAN MOTA/GETTY/ISTOCKPHOTO

# King of the beach India's Asiatic lions find new habitat by the sea

Sushmita Pathak

It was one morning, while walking on the beach in Gujarat, that Meena Venkataraman , a wildlife expert, spotted paw prints. But this was not a dog or fox. The footprints belonged to an Asiatic lion, the king of the jungle - and, increasingly, the beach.

Once found across Mesopotamia, Persia and the Indian subcontinent, the Asiatic lion was almost driven to extinction by the early 1900s owing to hunting and habitat loss, before a nawab in the western Indian state of Gujarat intervened. Today, the state is the only home of the Asiatic lion.

While most of the nearly 700 animals counted in 2020 are found in the dry, deciduous terrain of the Gir forest and its surrounding protected areas, many have been moving towards the sea.

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of lions living along Gujarat's coast rose from 20 to 104, and forest officials in Gujarat say coastal habitats are now the most significant of all satellite habitats that the lions occupy.

Finding lions in coastal areas is not unprecedented - in Namibia lions have adapted to the beach, where they hunt seals - but in India it is unusual, says Venkataraman, principal consultant at Carnivore Conservation and Research.

"Lions using the sandy beach and walking at the edge of the sea is an incredible sight. I have had the good luck to see that a few times," she said. In November 2022, researchers from Gujarat's forest department released findings from the first study of coastal Asiatic lions. Between 2019 and 2021, they monitored 10 lions fitted with GPS radio collars. One question they set out to answer was what kind of habitats the coastal lions were using, said Mohan Ram, deputy conservator of forests in Gir, and lead author of the study.



▲ *A lioness with her cubs in Gujarat. From 2010-2020, the number of lions living along the coast rose from 20 to 104* PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIPPE CARON/SYGMA/GETTY

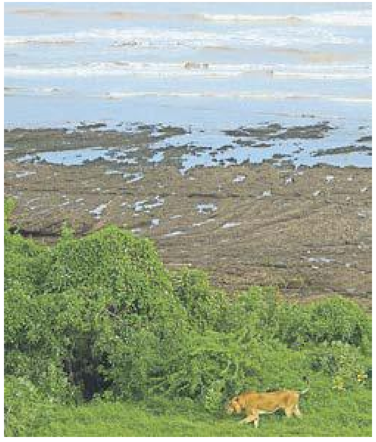
The answers were surprising, said Venkataraman, who was also part of the study. "They shelter in the prosopis plantations in the western coasts [of Gujarat]. These are very thick and very thorny habitats," she said, adding that it was unusual because the lion was believed to be a more "open area" animal. Meanwhile, "in the eastern coasts, lions are actually making use of salt pan areas and mangroves".

The researchers also compared the characteristics of the dispersing lions to those in Gir.

"Interestingly, we found the home ranges to be different," said

**'Pathetic'**
**England tree-planting scheme falls short**
*Page 35*





▲ *Lions prey on land animals, but in time they may scavenge dead fish*

Venkataraman. Lions living in coastal habitats had larger home ranges - the area where an animal usually roams - than those living in the Gir protected areas. Those living between the forest and coastal areas - the "link lions" - were found to have even larger home ranges, she said.

Unlike Namibia's coastal lions, those in Gujarat do not prey on marine animals but, said Venkataraman: "With time, they may develop a taste for scavenging dead fish." They mostly feed on wild boar, nilgai (a type of antelope) and stray cattle, but in 2020 there were reports of a lion preying on a turtle. Ram said forest officials were studying the coastal lions' food habits and hunting patterns.

The movement of lions to Gujarat's coast is not new but more of a "recolonisation of their lost territories", said Kausik Banerjee, a wildlife researcher who was not part of the study. But their presence on the beach is also indicative of a larger problem of limited space as their numbers grow.

Gujarat officials recently announced plans for a second home for Asiatic lions in the state's Barda wildlife sanctuary, about 60 miles from Gir. The Indian government is also reassessing a proposal to relocate some of the lions to the neighbouring state of Madhya Pradesh.

But as lions move outside protected areas, there is growing concern about human-lion conflict, said Banerjee, amid sporadic reports of lions attacking humans. They also sometimes kill livestock, but farmers receive compensation when that happens. Local communities revere the lions, and that has made coexistence possible, according to Banerjee. But, Venkataraman said: "As populations increase, [conflict with humans] is definitely a problem, not just with lions but with all wild animals the world over."

While lions may not be going to the beach for the view, it doesn't mean they don't enjoy it. Ram has often observed them sitting on the shore in the evenings, enjoying the sea breeze. It is a sight that may become increasingly common in years to come.

## A reawakening

# Landowner reveals how restoring nature helped him through grief

**Helena Horton**
*Environment reporter*

After his 15-year-old daughter Iris died in a quad bike accident in 2019, Ben Goldsmith discovered the healing power of nature - and became committed to ensuring everyone has access to it.

Goldsmith, a financier from a privileged dynasty of bankers and socialites, has become known in recent years for his sometimes controversial proclamations on nature and rewilding, campaigning against intensive sheep farming and for the reintroduction of wolves in the UK.

But it is only since his bereavement that the leading Conservative - and brother of Zac, the international environment minister - dedicated his life to the cause and publishing a book, God Is an Octopus, about Iris and nature.

He said: "In the aftermath of losing Iris, when everything seemed to be blackness and darkness, and I couldn't really imagine finding any kind of meaning or hope or joy, or light or colour in anything, I found that my love of nature carried me in a way that I wasn't expecting.

"There was a particular moment I remember so clearly. Just a few days after the accident, I wandered on my own, kind of bleary-eyed, down to swim. I just jumped into the pond and found myself feeling OK. It carried me, or held me in a way I hadn't expected."

After that, looking at his Somerset farm, he thought he could bring back some of the nature to it and help it return to life: "Doing that has given me more joy than any project or anything I've worked on all my life. The changes were almost instantaneous. As soon as we removed 50 sheep, 50 cows and 10 skip loads of barbed wire fencing, we rebuilt the stream, we filled in the ditches and ripped up the field drains and just let the land breathe. The place felt like a kind of sleeping giant that was starting to awaken. It was like life was reawakening.

"I found spending time in that nature and watching this happen gave me a sense of joy and meaning and hope that perhaps was absent elsewhere because we were living with the terrible darkness of having lost Iris. And so for me being able to spend time in nature and, even better, having the privilege of being able to participate in the restoration of nature was the most important thing in my life at that time, and remains so today because I feel that that's the purpose of my life."

For many of those who face a sudden loss, the feeling that it cannot be healed or fixed can be overwhelming.

"At the very beginning I found it impossible to cope with the feelings of wanting to fix something that couldn't be fixed," Goldsmith said.

He replayed the accident, where she was trapped under an all-terrain vehicle on his estate, over in his mind, finding solutions that were impossible to enact: "There was nothing I could do. So my brain just went round and round; what if she'd come a different day? What if she hadn't driven that vehicle? What if the grass hadn't been cut and so she'd stuck on the track … there were so many what ifs. It drove me to distraction."

But bringing life back to his land helped Goldsmith begin to recover. "Being able to heal something else and fix something else, perhaps in Iris's honour too, perhaps that was the reason why it was so healing."

> ***'People should have access to nature no matter where it is that they live'***
>
> **Ben Goldsmith**
> *Financier*



▲ *Ben Goldsmith with his daughter Iris, who died in a quad bike accident in 2019. He says bringing life back to his land helped him recover after her death*

He realised many people are not as privileged as him, and do not have the access to the healing power of nature. He has convinced London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, to set up a rewilding taskforce to bring nature to underprivileged communities in the city.

"I think there is an under-appreciated and pernicious inequity in this country when it comes to access to nature. I think all human beings viscerally need contact with nature, even if they don't fully know it themselves.

"I realised how unfair it is that people who live in the city often don't have access, particularly those from lower income backgrounds. We should have wild, colourful, beautiful nature woven right through the fabric of our cities. People should have access to nature no matter where it is that they live."

Though many Conservatives support landowners when it comes to wider access to nature, Goldsmith has become sympathetic to the right to roam ."I think there is an issue in terms of people's ability to access the countryside in this country," he said, "and that issue is pointedly illustrated when you see beaches crammed with people like sardines, because the only place they can go is the beach."

In fact, Goldsmith has diverged with many of his colleagues: "I disagree passionately and wholeheartedly with those elements of the Conservative party which are backward on the need to restore nature in our country," he said, "and I take particular objection to the way that they use valid concerns around things such as food security, or the culture of rural society being under threat by nature recovery, and because they only seem to obfuscate these issues and to prevent action, and their arguments are without merit.

"I think they're disingenuous and dishonest and wholly wrong. And I think they'll be left on the wrong side of history."

He said he has been "appalled" by the environment secretary, Thérèse Coffey, who has ruled out species reintroductions.

In fact it wouldn't be beyond the realms of possibility for him to support Labour in the next general election, if the party puts out a stronger proposition than the Conservatives for nature. "I will vote for the candidate that is the most ambitious on nature and climate in my constituency."

Goldsmith was on the board of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs until last year. He found it an eye-opener.

" I was horrified to discover the degree to which the National Farmers' Union and also the industrial fishing representatives, were able to influence government policy. There was an old boys' club and a bit of a revolving door approach, whereby they all knew each other and anyone who dared stand up to those two industry representative groups was cowed into submission very quickly."

But he added: "We are winning. A lot of the rage we see in the papers and on social media today from those interests is coming about because they know that their influence is starting to wane."

*God Is an Octopus is published by Bloomsbury and on sale now*



▲ *The Somerset Levels. Goldsmith says: 'All human beings viscerally need contact with nature'* PHOTOGRAPH: ROBWILKINS@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK

# CAN PIG FARMERS BE PAID FAIRLY?

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# 'Pathetic': England-wide tree scheme creates just 192 hectares in two years

**Patrick Barkham**

A government scheme to support the natural regeneration of trees has in two years created an area of new woodland smaller than London's Regent's Park.

Just 192 hectares (474 acres) of "natural colonisation" have been established in England through the Woodland Creation Offer, a financial support package launched by the government in May 2021 after natural regeneration was hailed as one of the cheapest, efficient and most wildlife-friendly ways of increasing tree cover and capturing carbon.

This government-supported natural colonisation accounted for less than 4% of the total new woodland recorded in England in 2021-22.

Guy Shrubsole, a campaigner and the author of The Lost Rainforests of Britain, said: "Trees literally grow for free when you prevent overgrazing, so for the government to have supported a mere 192 hectares of natural regeneration over the past two years is a pathetic result.

"Ministers urgently need to let our ancient woods and temperate rainforests spread naturally – what's holding this back is bureaucratic box-ticking that prefers to count numbers of saplings planted over actually restoring vibrant ecosystems."

Britain is one of the least wooded nations in Europe with 13% forest cover overall. New woodland creation has consistently fallen below ambitious government targets. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pledged to increase Britain's forest cover by 30,000 hectares annually by 2025 but less than half that target – about 14,000 hectares – was created in 2021-22.



▲ *Bluebells in Lockeridge, Wiltshire. The scheme was aimed at supporting the natural regeneration of trees*
PHOTOGRAPH: ADAM BURTON/ALAMY

"Natural colonisation" is the Forestry Commission's term for woods created on land where in recent history there was none. It uses the more popular term "natural regeneration" to refer to allowing natural reseeding inside woods rather than replanting blocks of cleared forest. There is more of this "natural regeneration" occurring in English woods, and also some natural colonisation that is not funded by the Woodland Creation scheme, including rewilding schemes on large estates such as Boothby in Lincolnshire.

Charlie Burrell, who pioneered natural regeneration on former pasture and arable fields at Knepp in West Sussex 20 years ago, creating a biodiversity boom including rare nightingales and turtle doves, said: "We believe that 'natural colonisation' has to be part of our future treescape and it's really important that we recognise that it gives us an extraordinary journey for a landscape to start to recover and life to pour back into the world."

But Burrell said foresters were sceptical about "natural colonisation" because it did not produce a reliable timber crop in a predictable number of years. "There will be wood and timber trees growing but you can't say there will be x amount of fellable timber or firewood. But you're creating a treescape that will be really rich in biodiversity and in sucking down carbon."

In 2019, about 1,400 hectares of new woodland was created in the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland through national regeneration – the same area of new woodland as was created in the whole of England that same year.

One reason there has been so little uptake of the government-funded natural colonisation since 2021 is overly onerous rules, say campaigners. The funding requires areas for natural colonisation to be within 75 metres of established woods or large hedgerows to provide a source of seeds but scientific evidence suggests that woods can quickly establish much farther from seed sources.

Research has found jays will bury acorns hundreds of metres away from the oaks where they are collected.

According to Defra, its 75-metre threshold is appropriate when considering "value for money" and it says it will consider longer distances in exceptional cases.

A Defra spokesperson said: "We recognise the vital role that natural colonisation plays in increasing woodland cover in England … that is why we have made natural colonisation available under the England Woodland Creation Offer and through our Woodland Creation Partnerships such as the Northern Forest."

According to Shrubsole, there also persists a strong culture within the Forestry Commission that woodland creation is all about planting trees, with landowners advised against "natural colonisation".

"Surely we ought to be using every tool in the box to establish woodland? Natural regeneration is allowing nature to do this for free, without the capital outlay of going out there with a sapling, a shovel and a tree stake. There should be more support for natural regeneration in the future."

# Plan for tidal barrier on the Wash sparks fierce debate

**Helena Horton**
*Environment reporter*

Plans for a renewable energy tidal barrier linking Norfolk and Lincolnshire have sparked fierce debate between scientists, wildlife charities and the chief executive of a port company who is leading the project.

James Sutcliffe, an entrepreneur who has managed and advised port companies in Sierra Leone and Bangladesh, has now set his sights on the Wash, which is the sea, mudflats and saltmarsh between the two counties.

The proposal would include a port, powered by tidal energy, which he says would produce electricity for 600,000 homes and businesses in the region. He claims it would also create opportunities for cruise ship tourism, and a new road linking Lincolnshire to Norfolk in 20 minutes.

Sutcliffe says the calm waters created by the tidal barrier would provide opportunities for "marinas and construction of desirable waterside developments" and "safe sailing", and that the construction would protect the local environment from flooding.

In his confidential pitch for investment, he claims to have government backing: "We have received strong, albeit informal, institutional support for the core development and do not anticipate difficulty in securing the development capital at a time when renewable energy projects are so topical in government after Cop26 and sought after by major financial institutions."

The barrier is very controversial in the local area, as it would be across a stunning and ecologically important stretch of coastline, home to a globally important colony of seals and many rare wading birds.

Tammy Smalley, from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, said: "Having grown up and lived around the Wash all my life I know the vital service it provides to communities. As a natural flood defence, a source of food, and a wild place to visit, it should be protected at all costs – not destroyed to generate obscenely expensive energy and increase the risk of flooding."



▲ *The Wash, proposed site of the tidal barrier*
PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE/ THE GUARDIAN

**600,000**
*Homes and businesses that James Sutcliffe claims could be powered by tidal energy from the project*

Dominic Buscall, who runs Wild Ken Hill nature reserve in north Norfolk, told the Guardian: "His wildlife claims are supported by no evidence … The way the Wash works is it's quite a dynamic wilderness, so you get very complex movements of water and sediment which creates a mosaic of mudflats, saltmarsh, channels, tidal streams and that is what makes it so great for wildlife.

"Over 2 million birds visit a year, it hosts 50% of Europe's common seals, and it has eels which are critically endangered globally. To interfere with those processes is highly likely to be very damaging."

Doug Parr, Greenpeace UK's chief scientist, said: "In the middle of a climate and nature emergency we need clean energy developments that work in harmony with nature without damaging it further."

Chris Binnie, a visiting professor at Exeter University and a tidal barrier consultant, believes ecological damage could be mitigated, saying: "It should be possible to largely replicate bird feeding areas, an important factor in this sensitive area."

Sutcliffe told the Guardian: "Our mission is to maintain the Wash boundaries and its ecology, which will otherwise be badly impacted by more intense climate change enhanced storm surges which, in time, could overtop the current sea defences and flood the Fens and south Lincolnshire."

**Action for conservation**
100 for the Ocean brings together 100 photographers selected for their contributions to the work of conservation. Photographs are being sold to help fund under-recognised ocean-focused NGOs, voted for by photographers. The top-voted NGOs so far include: Whale Guardians, Coast First Nations, and Por el Mar.

*The print collection can be viewed at 100fortheocean.com*





*As Arctic temperatures rise, polar bears in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard face a world in which the sea ice melts earlier each year, shrinking their hunting grounds and leaving them struggling to find food to survive*

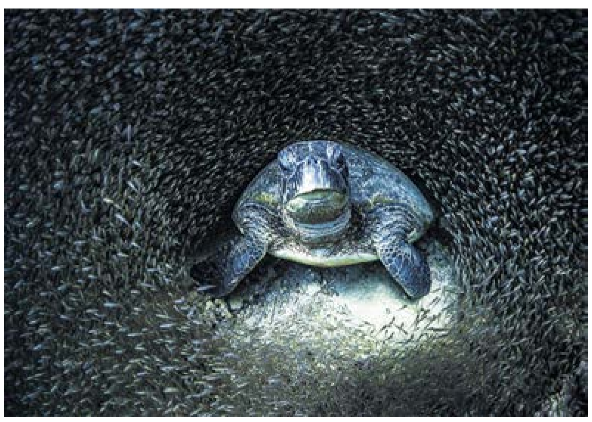


▼ A sea lion pup in Jurien Bay, Australia, playfully approaches the photographer carrying a piece of kelp



▼ Polar bears explore a ruined home at an abandoned Soviet-era weather station on Kolyuchin Island, Russia
DMITRY KOKH





◀ A green sea turtle resting under a ledge is framed by glassfish as it stares intently at the camera on Ningaloo Reef, Western Australia
AIMEE JAN



◀ A young bear swims across a river at high tide following its sibling to find food in Katmai national park, Alaska
LIANNA NIXON



◀ South-west Australian photographer Andrew Semark says capturing this image helped to bring his focus back: 'I remember as this particular wave broke, the incredible blue colour that was displayed in front of me'
ANDREW SEMARK



◀ An emperor penguin propels itself out of the ocean in Antarctica in a leap that seems to defy the laws of physics. The birds can stay out at sea for weeks at a time
PAUL NICKLEN

# WILL YOU STAND WITH REFUGEES?

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
United Kingdom for UNHCR

**Please join the Refugee Rapid Response Fund by giving £21 a month.**

By joining the fund, you can stand in solidarity with refugee women, children and men everywhere – and help UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, respond to a humanitarian emergency anywhere in the world within 72 hours.

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Crises in countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine and Sudan have seen the number of displaced people worldwide more than double in less than a decade. As a result, UNHCR's resources are stretched perilously thin.

By joining the Refugee Rapid Response Fund, when a crisis erupts you can help UNHCR respond immediately so families have shelter, protection and survival essentials. Over the course of a year, £21 a month could provide emergency survival kits for three families who have fled their homes.

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Nobody chooses to become a refugee. People flee their homes when their lives are in danger, often with only the clothes on their back. By joining the Refugee Rapid Response Fund, you can be there for refugees now – and the next time a crisis erupts your gifts will allow UNHCR teams to provide people with shelter, protection and the essentials they need to survive.




UNHCR teams in Aleppo, delivering lifesaving assistance in the wake of the Türkiye/Syria earthquakes, February 2023.




UNHCR delivering emergency survival kits at the Chad/Sudan border to help people fleeing the current conflict, May 2023.

**HOW YOUR £21 A MONTH CAN HELP SAVE REFUGEES' LIVES**

1. Your gifts can help UNHCR buy emergency supplies.
2. When emergency strikes, the supplies you help fund can be flown anywhere within 72 hours.
3. Your lifesaving support reaches vulnerable displaced people when they most need it.

**Respond today to receive your Refugee Solidarity Ribbon**

#WithRefugees

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**Yes I would like to give a regular gift of:** ☐ **£21** OR ☐ **my own amount of:** £ ______ **per month to UK for UNHCR**

Direct Debits are collected on or shortly after 10th of each month

Title First name Last name

Address Postcode

Email* Phone*

*Please provide your details to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support, future appeals and details of the other ways you may wish to help.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency United Kingdom for UNHCR

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DIRECT Debit

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GC re UK for UNHCR

Branch Sort Code

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Bank/building society

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Town

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Please pay GC re UK for UNHCR Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with GC re UK for UNHCR and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature D D M M Y Y Y Y

Please return this form to: **Freepost UK FOR UNHCR** (you don't need a stamp)

Your donation will help us provide support to displaced families, wherever and whenever it's needed most.

P23RRAGU2

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☐ I would like UK for UNHCR to claim Gift Aid on this donation (currently 25p for each £1 donated), as well as any donations I make in the future and have made in the past four years to UK for UNHCR, until I notify you otherwise. By ticking the box, I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that council tax and VAT do not qualify. If your circumstances change or you have any questions, please contact our Supporter Care Team on **0800 029 3883** or email **supportercare@unrefugees.org.uk**

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**Corleone's grim past**
**Town seeks removal of freed mafia boss**
*Page 43*

**A 'face-toasting' listen**
**Ukrainian female punk band on tour**
*Page 46*





# World



***'This disregards the sacrifices made by the Syrian people over the past 12 years'***

**Syrian Opposition Coalition**

◀ *Bashar al-Assad received a warm welcome in Jeddah yesterday in a visit that ends 12 years of isolation* PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

# Assad tells Arab League he hopes his return marks new era of peace in Middle East

**Patrick Wintour**
*Diplomatic editor*

Twelve years after his country was thrown out of the Arab League due to his bloody suppression of pro-democracy protests, Syria's leader, Bashar al-Assad, has told a summit of the bloc that he hopes his return marks a new phase of peace and prosperity in the region.

A smiling Assad received a warm welcome in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah, voicing hope in his first summit speech since 2011 for a new era of Arab cooperation.

Assad's return to bloc without any preconditions on future treatment of millions of Syrians displaced by civil war marks a turning point in the Middle East, and suggests his endurance and brutality has paid off.

His critics say his rule inside Syria remains fragile, with large parts of the north of the country outside his control, and millions of refugees implacably opposed to his rule in the countries surrounding Syria.

"I hope that it marks the beginning of a new phase of Arab action for solidarity among us, for peace in our region, development and prosperity instead of war and destruction," Assad told the summit.

Arab countries, he said, had to shape their own destiny free of foreign interference, an ironic aspiration given his dependence on Iranian and Russian military support.

Assad's arrival was marked in the streets of Jeddah, where the Syrian flag was displayed prominently. At the opening group photograph a smiling Assad hugged the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who has been pursuing a policy of regional rapprochement, restoring diplomatic ties with Iran and ending the kingdom's years-long war against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen.



▲ *A protest in the rebel-controlled Syrian city of Araz against Assad and Syria's rehabilitation by the Arab League* PHOTOGRAPH: KHALIL ASHAWI/REUTERS

In his initial meetings, Assad met Saudi officials as well as the increasingly dictatorial Tunisian president, Kais Saied, who is waging his own crackdown on dissent in the birthplace of the Arab spring protests that swept the region in 2011. "We stand together against the movement of darkness," Assad said, apparently referring to extremist groups that came to dominate the Syrian opposition as his country's civil war ground on, and which drew a large number of recruits from Tunisia.

Saudi Arabia, following a lead from the United Arab Emirates, has stopped funding or supplying weapons to the Syrian opposition, deciding that their efforts to dislodge Assad have failed – a policy that is not being followed by western powers, which are determined to maintain sanctions against the regime.

In a sign some Arab states share the US disapproval of Assad's rehabilitation, Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, walked out of the summit just before the Syrian president spoke.

Officials described the emir's visit as a courtesy visit, but it was striking that the emir himself had travelled the 800 miles to send the message. The emir did not hold any bilaterals or speak himself at the summit and, clearly not wanting to damage the sensitive and recently fraught relationship with Saudi Arabia, sent good wishes to his Saudi hosts.

On Wednesday, Lebanon's foreign minister, Abdallah Bou Habib, said the return of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the region was among the priorities that the Arab League was working through in coordination with Syria. Bou Habib denied there would be any forced return of displaced Syrians from Lebanon, a key sticking point in talks with the Assad government after its return to the Arab fold.

In a strongly worded statement, the Syrian Opposition Coalition described the inclusion of Assad as a "deplorable endorsement of his heinous crimes against the Syrian people" that] "disregards the sacrifices made by Syrians over the past 12 years, insults the victims who await justice, and abandons the Syrian people who yearn for freedom".

Although the Arab League is often dismissed as a divided and pointless talking shop, Riyadh hopes the summit will make progress on ending fighting in Sudan and Yemen.

The recent Chinese-brokered Saudi-Iranian agreement has raised hopes that peace is possible in Yemen, where Iran has been backing the Houthi rebels who have been fighting to dislodge the Saudi-backed, UN-recognised government. It is not clear if Iran will end its support for the Houthis or on what terms.

For different reasons, the most senior leaders of Morocco, Oman, Algeria, Kuwait and the UAE did not attend the summit. The UAE, a stronger backer of the Southern Transitional Front, a group fighting for the independence of southern Yemen, takes a different view to Riyadh on how to end Yemen's civil war. The UAE said the absence of its president, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, was owing to a prior engagement rather than a diplomatic disagreement.

US politicians are rallying to block the Arab effort to bring Assad back into the international community, taking a somewhat harder line than the White House has so far.

The surprise guest in Jeddah was the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who arrived wearing his trademark fatigues. He said he wanted to outline his peace plan for Ukraine to the Arab states.

He tweeted on his arrival that his agenda included "political prisoners in Crimea and temporarily occupied territories, the return of our people, peace formula, energy cooperation. KSA [Saudi Arabia] plays a significant role and we are ready to take our cooperation to a new level."

# Iran condemned for executing three over violence in protests against government

**Patrick Wintour**
*Diplomatic editor*

Iran has executed three men it said were implicated in the deaths of three members of the security forces during anti-government protests, drawing condemnation and risking further international isolation.

Saleh Mirhashemi, Majid Kazemi and Saeed Yaqoubi were killed yesterday morning, the Tasnim agency reported. Crowds had gathered outside the prison where they were being held on Thursday night as rumours of their imminent executions grew.

Cultural figures inside and outside Iran as well as family members had stepped up a campaign over the past week to halt the executions on the grounds that Iranian authorities had failed to produce definitive evidence of the men's responsibility for the deaths of two members of the Basij paramilitary force and a law enforcement officer on 16 November.

Families and supporters held nightly vigils outside the Dastgerd prison in Isfahan in support of the men who were being held inside. They were given a final meeting with their families on Wednesday, raising fears their execution was imminent.

Immediately after their execution yesterday, state media reran video posts of what were presented as the defendants' confessions, which Amnesty International said had been extracted by torture.

At least seven people have been hanged in relation to the protest movement that swept Iran in September, and dozens more have been sentenced to death or convicted of capital offences.

The EU condemned the executions of the three Iranian men "in the strongest possible terms" and once again called on the Iranian authorities to "immediately end the strongly condemnable practice of imposing and carrying out death sentences against protesters".

The latest executions "must have serious consequences" for Tehran or dozens of "other protesters will be in danger", said Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the director of the Norway-based group Iran Human Rights. "We must make the Islamic republic leaders understand that execution of protesters will not be tolerated," he wrote on Twitter.

Hengaw, another Norway-based rights group, decried an "unfathomable wave of executions in Iran".

The nationwide protests that began last autumn have turned into one of the boldest challenges to the clerical leadership since the 1979 revolution. They were ignited by the death of the 22-year-old Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Iran's "morality police" on 16 September.


▲ *Saleh Mirhashemi*


▲ *Saeed Yaqoubi*


▲ *Majid Kazemi*

Prominent Iranian figures including the actor Taraneh Alidoosti - who was herself jailed for a few weeks in December for publishing a photograph of herself without a hijab - and the footballer Ali Karimi had expressed their concern about the fate of the three men. Rallies in support of them had been held in Berlin, London and Stockholm.

A video showing a group of mothers from the western city of Sanandaj condemning the death sentences was shared on social media.

Friends of the families of the men said one of them - Kazemi - had been suspended upside down by interrogators and shown a video of his brother being tortured.

In an audio message recorded inside Dastgerd prison, Kazemi said: "I swear to God I am innocent. I didn't have any weapons on me. [Security forces] kept beating me and ordering me to say this weapon is mine … I told them I would say whatever they wanted, just please leave my family alone. I did whatever they wanted because of the torture."

*Additional reporting*
**Agence France-Presse**

# A new era for Thailand The cycling 'giant-killer' who slew a political beast and promised change

**Rebecca Ratcliffe**
**Pirada Anuwech** *Bangkok*

At the small Bangkok shophouse that Rukchanok Srinork uses as an office, the floor is cluttered with stacks of campaign signs and leaflets. There are bottles of Fanta and fruit donated by her supporters (orange is her party's colour), and, by the entrance stand, her team's well-known bicycles.

Rukchanok, also known as Ice, is one of many young MPs with the progressive Move Forward party, which stunned observers by taking the most seats in last Sunday's election in Thailand.

Rukchanok became known online for cycling around her district, Bang Bon, in the sweltering Bangkok heat as part of a grassroots campaign. Her work paid off: she managed to oust the son of one of Thailand's powerful political families, defeating him by 21,000 votes. One Thai media outlet called her a "giant-killer" for stealing a seat from Wan Ubumrung, the son of a veteran politician from Pheu Thai, the heavyweight opposition party. On social media a post described her as the woman who "rode a bicycle to fell an elephant".

"We thought we could win," Rukchanok said in an interview this week. "We didn't expect to win this big. I think our generation right now is starting a new era."

Rukchanok's campaign for Move Forward was run on a more modest budget than others, she said. In the mornings, she stood at a road junction, using the 90 or so seconds when traffic stopped at the red lights to shout her campaign messages through a megaphone. Her team would hand out campaign leaflets fashioned into garlands or bags, in the style of those sold by street vendors in Bangkok's notorious traffic. In the afternoons, she cycled with a megaphone slung over the shoulder.




▲ *The newly elected Move Forward MP Rukchanok Srinork campaigned on a bicycle using a megaphone*
PHOTOGRAPH: JACK TAYLOR/THE GUARDIAN

Move Forward campaigned promising significant reform and was the only party to state from the outset that it would not enter a coalition with military generals who took power in a coup in 2014. It promised to demilitarise politics, to tackle the big monopolies, expand welfare and modernise education. It was also the only party to commit to reforming the lese-majesty law, under which criticising the king can lead to 15 years in prison.

It has a strong support base of young people, many of whom took part in monarchy reform protests in 2020. Some of the party's MPs, including Rukchanok, were on the frontlines of such rallies and have since been charged with lese-majesty.

The conservative royalist military establishment, however, strongly opposes amendments to the lese-majesty law. This means, regardless of the election result, the path to power isn't straightforward. Move Forward's leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, is in talks to form a coalition. But if his numbers aren't strong enough, he could be blocked from becoming prime minister by the unelected senate, which was appointed by the military and votes on future prime ministers.

In the past, Rukchanok, 30, held very different political views, and had in fact supported the military coup in 2014, welcoming the arrival of Prayuth Chan-ocha, the coup leader who went on to become prime minister. It was when friends challenged her about her opinions that her stance began to change. "It made me think more critically. I questioned who would get the most benefit from the coup."

Many other young people had made the same shift, she said, adding that the political discussion today was very different and more free compared with 10 years ago.

Even if in power, it is unclear if Move Forward would be able to actually amend the law on monarchy issues, given that it would be relying on support from other parties.

Rukchanok said she realised that being in government would be challenging. Ultimately, she wanted to create a Thailand that was more equal, she said, pointing to the education and justice system, where the experiences of rich and poor people are very different: "To be born poor in this country is a very big thing - you don't have the resources, you can't go to a good school, you have less opportunity."

# Disney plan for $1bn Florida expansion scrapped in row with DeSantis

Mark Sweney

Disney has scrapped plans to build a near $1bn (£800m) corporate campus for 2,000 employees in Florida, amid an increasingly bitter political and legal battle with the state's governor, Ron DeSantis, over the future of the entertainment giant's theme parks.

Walt Disney, which has also announced the closure of its $2,500-a-night Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser hotel in Orlando, said it would no longer relocate California-based employees to the new campus about 18 miles east of Walt Disney World.

"Given the considerable changes that have occurred since the announcement of this project, including new leadership and changing business conditions, we have decided not to move forward with construction of the campus," said Josh D'Amaro, the head of Disney's parks, in an email to staff on Thursday. "This was not an easy decision to make, but I believe it is the right one."

Disney also announced it was to shut its experimental Star Wars hotel, which offered guests an interactive adventure aided by actors.

The hotel, which opened at Walt Disney World last March and is to close in September, drew criticism from reviewers and guests who complained about small rooms that were designed to mimic the feel of a spaceship and the lack of typical amenities such as a gym or pool.

The scrapping of the campus plan by Bob Iger, who returned to run Disney in November having been replaced by Bob Chapek just two years previously, comes as relations between the company and DeSantis hit an all-time low.

Last year, DeSantis approved legislation stripping Disney of its special tax status, created by a 1967 law that allowed it to self-govern the roughly 10,000-hectare (25,000-acre) Orlando area where its Walt Disney World theme park complex is located, in a move seen as retribution for the company's opposition to a new "don't say gay" law limiting discussion of LGBTQ+ issues in schools.

The company remains in a legal battle with the state over the takeover of the special tax district. DeSantis has argued that "woke Disney" should not receive special treatment in the state.



◀ The Walt Disney World resort brings millions of visitors to Florida each year

PHOTOGRAPH: JOE BURBANK/ ORLANDO SENTINEL

*'Does the state want us to invest more, employ more people and pay more taxes or not?'*

**Bob Iger**
*Disney CEO*

D'Amaro appeared to indicate the dispute had played a factor in the decision to cancel the campus project. "While some were excited about the new campus, I know that this decision and the circumstances surrounding it have been difficult for others," he said.

Jeremy Redfern, the governor's press secretary, said the state was never convinced the Lake Nona campus project would come to fruition.

"Given the company's financial straits, falling market cap and declining stock price, it is unsurprising that they would restructure their business operations and cancel unsuccessful ventures," he said.

**75,000**
*The number of people employed at Walt Disney's theme park and resorts in the state of Florida*

Disney is part way through a plan to cut 7,000 jobs, prompted by mounting losses at its streaming business, as it seeks to cut costs by $5.5bn.

Last week, Iger questioned Florida's interest in the company's continued investment in the state.

In a call with investors to discuss quarterly results, he noted that Disney employed more than 75,000 people in Florida, attracted millions of visitors each year to Walt Disney World and had plans to invest billions to expand the resort.

"Does the state want us to invest more, employ more people and pay more taxes or not?" Iger asked.

# I'm the only candidate who can beat Biden, says DeSantis

Martin Pengelly
*New York*

The rightwing governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, reportedly told top donors only he, Donald Trump and Joe Biden are "credible" candidates for president in 2024 - and he is the only Republican who can beat the incumbent Democrat.

"You have basically three people at this point that are credible in this whole thing," DeSantis said during a call on Thursday run by a fundraising committee, the New York Times said, adding that a reporter was listening.

"Biden, Trump and me. And I think of those three, two have a chance to get elected president - Biden and me, based on all the data in the swing states, which is not great for the former president and probably insurmountable because people aren't going to change their view of him," DeSantis added.

DeSantis has long been expected to run but reports indicate he will make it official on Wednesday, filing documents with the Federal Election Commission and releasing an announcement video.

A meeting of donors is reportedly scheduled for Miami the same day, with a rally to follow in DeSantis's home town, Dunedin, between 30 May and 1 June, according to Bloomberg and the Miami Herald.

Trump faces unprecedented legal jeopardy, but by presenting himself as the victim of political witch-hunts, he has established big polling leads.

DeSantis lags by more than 30 points in polling averages but is way ahead of other candidates, declared or not.



▲ Ron DeSantis told donors there are only three 'credible' candidates

# Chinese woman held for online support of banned Beijing comic

Helen Davidson *Taipei*
Chi Hui Lin

Police arrested a woman for supporting online the Beijing comedian who was punished for a joke that the authorities say insults the military.

According to state media, the woman, 34, reportedly surnamed Shi, admitted she had posted "inappropriate" comments about Chinese soldiers. Shi's post was in reaction to the stiff punishment delivered to Li Haoshi, also known as House, over a joke about two dogs chasing a squirrel reminding him of one of President Xi Jinping's military slogans.

After an audio recording of the joke went viral, Beijing police launched an investigation under a 2021 law which criminalised insulting the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

China's ministry of culture and tourism said: "We will never allow any company or individual use the Chinese capital as a stage to wantonly slander the glorious image of the PLA."

The comedian's employer was fined £1.7m. Related hashtags were viewed more than 2bn times, with some comments in support.

Li later apologised on Weibo, which is strictly monitored and censored, and said he felt "deeply guilty and regretful" about the joke, before his account was suspended.

On Tuesday, in a post that appears to have been taken down, Shi posted: "Why should HOUSE be banned? Aren't all soldier brothers just dog brothers?" The Global Times reported she had been put in administrative detention, which allows police to hold someone for up to 15 days without charge for a minor public order offence.

On Weibo, news about Shi had been read about 4m times. Most comments are generally angry at her.

One said: "Without the military, how could you have a stable life today? You are not grateful for your words, you are not a human being!".

Another said: "They never thought that they would be insulted by some bad-minded youngsters years later for having defended the country." Comedy operators have cancelled shows and fear has spread among performers.

An overseas Chinese comic who requested anonymity said Li's joke had nothing to do with politics and that they felt "shocked and desperate", adding: "I didn't think that the red line would be so easily crossed and that there would be no mercy.

"Even internet users, who have no public influence, are being pursued. The whole atmosphere has become not just official censorship but [also] self-censorship and mutual censorship. For a long time, in this way, one thinks and creates with fear. I feel that all areas of creativity and expression have no room for survival."

# Greek government under fire after video shows forced expulsion of asylum seekers

**Helena Smith**
*Athens*

The Greek government is facing fresh condemnation of its migration policies, days before general elections, following the release of video footage depicting the forcible expulsion of asylum seekers who had sought sanctuary in the country.

Barely 48 hours before polls open, the prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis's centre-right administration has been put on the defensive by extraordinary documentation of the illegal "pushback".

The footage, taken by an Austrian activist on Lesbos last month, was brought to light by the New York Times, which published the material yesterday, after it was "verified and corroborated" by the US outlet.

"For years, activists and journalists have dug into claims that the Greek authorities are illegally pushing migrants out of Greece's borders, but hard evidence has been fragmentary," the paper said. "The Greek government has consistently denied the mistreatment of migrants. The video may be the most damning evidence yet of its violations of international laws and EU rules governing how asylum seekers must be treated."

The footage amounts to a shocking indictment of policies the Mitsotakis government has long denied.

In evidence that is likely to ignite an excoriating response in other EU capitals, a group of 12 asylum seekers, including children and a six-month-old baby, are filmed being summarily expelled by Greek coastguard officers from Lesbos, where they had arrived from Turkey.

The refugees, described as Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians, are shown being driven in a white van to a remote spot on the Aegean island before being forced into a high-speed inflatable boat by men whose facial features are concealed by balaclavas. The dinghy then transfers them to a Hellenic coastguard vessel, which proceeds to abandon them on a raft in the middle of the Aegean Sea.

> *'This may be the most damning evidence of Greece's violation of international laws'*
>
> **New York Times**

There they are left adrift before being picked up by the Turkish coastguard.

"We didn't expect to survive on that day," Naima Hassan Aden, a 27-year-old from Somalia who experienced the ordeal with her baby is quoted as saying. "When they were putting us on the inflatable raft, they did so without any mercy."

The incident took place on 11 April, according to the publication.

Previously, "pushbacks" have taken place at sea, where the Greek authorities argue they are permitted by law to repulse undocumented migrants attempting to enter the country's sovereign territory.

The expulsion depicted in the video released yesterday does not take place at sea, or even in disputed waters, but on land inside EU territory, which the asylum seekers have safely reached.

The forcible return of people seeking refuge from war and persecution is in violation of laws including the 1951 Geneva convention, to which Greece is a signatory.

The government accepts its migration policy is "tough" but insists it is "fair", with Mitsotakis, who is seeking a second term in office, hailing the drop in migrant flows and arrival of asylum seekers as a major success of his four-year tenure.

Visiting Lesbos last week on the campaign trail, he jubilantly said he had kept his promise to protect Greece's land and sea borders.

"I am especially proud that I kept my commitment to local communities to solve this issue," he said. "We implemented a firm but fair policy on migration. We protected our country's borders both on land and at sea."

Greeks, by and large, have welcomed the ruling party's tough stance on migration.

"The Greek public has proven to be very insensitive on this issue," said Prof Yannis Tsirbas, who teaches political science at the university of Athens. "The government's stance may be hostile but it has also proven to be a major success."



▲ *The app aims to shed light on the unequal division of household chores in Spain* PHOTOGRAPH: RADIUS IMAGES/ALAMY

# Who does all the chores? Spain's new app will reveal the ugly truth

**Sam Jones**
*Madrid*

The Spanish government is hoping to encourage men to do more at home by developing a free app that will log how much time each household or family member spends on domestic chores.

Announcing the measure in Geneva this week, Spain's secretary of state for equality, Ángela Rodríguez, said the aim was to shed light on the invisible "mental load" overwhelmingly carried by women when it comes to domestic tasks.

Rodríguez told the UN committee on the elimination of discrimination against women: "We'll soon be unveiling an app that will allow people to log the household chores that different members of the family perform so we can see how many hours of work we each spend on housework and thus reorder the time we spend doing that housework."

She said the app, with a reported development budget of €211,750 (£184,000), was designed to ensure that every family member pulled their weight.

"We think this is an exercise that could be used at home to share the chores out between, sons, daughter, fathers, mothers, or between flatmates or life partners because the division of those tasks is sometimes unequal," she said.

Rodríguez said the app would highlight the invisible jobs necessary for the smooth running of a house. Although tidying up the kitchen might take 20 minutes, she said, it depended on someone having remembered to buy washing-up liquid or plan the shopping list.

She responded to critics of the plan in a tweet, saying: "Ah, privileges. What those who are annoyed by the chore-sharing app are really annoyed about is the possibility of having to start doing their bit at home."

The app is part of the equality ministry's shared responsibilities policies, intended to improve equality between men and women.

A survey last year by Spain's National Statistics Institute found that 45.9% of women performed the majority of domestic chores, compared with 14.7% of men.

# Hundreds of people forced to flee Spanish villages at risk from wildfire

**Sam Jones**

Hundreds of civilian and military firefighters are tackling a wildfire in south-west Spain that has burned across at least 7,500 hectares (18,500 acres) of land and forced the evacuation of more than 500 people since it began on Wednesday evening.

Efforts to fight the "very large and difficult" fire in the Las Hurdes and Sierra de Gata areas of northern Extremadura were being hindered by strong winds, according to the regional government, which believes the blaze was started deliberately.

People in three villages – Cadalso, Descargamaría and Robledillo de Gata – have been evacuated and three main roads closed.

The regional government said more than 400 firefighters, including members of the military emergencies unit, had been deployed and were using 10 earthmovers, 14 aircraft and 23 vehicles to try to bring the fire under control.

Spain's prime minister cancelled a campaign trip to the region in advance of next week's local and regional elections. Pedro Sánchez said he was following the situation closely and offered his full support.

Begoña García, the head of Extremadura's agriculture department, asked people in the area to let police know if they had seen anything suspicious, adding that residents "know that this was done on purpose".

Local emergency services also asked people to keep out of the affected areas so as not to clog up evacuation routes.

Marcos Hernández, who lives in Pinofranqueado, where the fire began, told the Efe news agency that people felt "very angry" and powerless as the blaze continued.

Fires in 2003 devoured more than 8,000 hectares of land in Las Hurdes and burned through more than 5,000 hectares in the same area last July.

According to the European Forest Fire Information System, more than 315,000 hectares of land in Spain were hit by wildfires last year.

The Spanish government last week approved a €2.2bn (£1.9bn) plan to help farmers and consumers cope with drought exacerbated by the hottest and driest April on record.

The environment minister, Teresa Ribera, said the effects of the climate emergency were increasingly evident. "Spain is … used to periods of drought but there's no doubt that, as a consequence of the climate change we're experiencing, we're seeing far more frequent and intense events and phenomena," she said.



▲ *A forest burns in Pinofranqueado, in an image from an official video*

**400**
*Number of firefighters tackling the fire in Extremadura, which has burned across 7,500 hectares*



# Corleone curse

# The Sicilian town trying to to escape its mobster past

**Lorenzo Tondo**
*Corleone*



▲ *The town of Corleone was the domain of the mafia boss Totò Riina, below. The Godfather films, right, used the name but it is a link that the town's mayor, Nicolò Nicolosi, below right, wants to shed*
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: PARAMOUNT/ALLSTAR





If it were not called Corleone, the small, quaint town would appear to visitors as one of many others of the Sicilian hinterland: groups of elderly people strolling in a square, rows of low sand-coloured houses and a 16th-century church on the highest hill.

It would be difficult to imagine that for almost half a century it was the stronghold of the mafia's bloodiest and most powerful clan, and the fiefdom of Italy's most feared mobster, Totò Riina. Immortalised in cinema and literature by The Godfather, it became synonymous with organised crime, even if the bosses who once governed it - Riina, Luciano Leggio and Bernardo Provenzano - are now dead.

But, tired of dealing with a name that has become a curse, Corleone is struggling to escape its mobster past. The local government last week voted for a resolution demanding the "swift removal" of Giuseppe Salvatore Riina, 46, the third child of the former boss of bosses, who returned last month after eight years in jail for extortion, money laundering and mafia association. The resolution describes Riina Jr as an "unwelcome fellow citizen", whose family caused "reputational damage to the city".

The mayor, Nicolò Nicolosi, said the local government had decided to "sound an alarm", though the ultimate decision rests with magistrates in Palermo or the national government.

"Riina Jr, once back in town, was welcomed with a cordial attitude by the people and this is a dangerous sign in a period where the community was finally moving on, leaving its mafia past behind. The truth is that most of them are being polite because they still fear him. The reality is that they are tired of him and his family," he said.

Dario Triolo, whose father, Ugo Triolo, a lawyer, was murdered by the mafia in 1978, said: "Sometimes people point out to me that the person next to me at the bar was related to Provenzano or Riina. But the truth is, I don't feel anything for these people. I don't give a damn about them. If I had feelings for them, I would have ruined my life. But if you ask me what I think of Riina Jr, I'll tell you I wish he wasn't in Corleone. Why is he back?"

When the American writer Mario Puzo decided that the fictional protagonist of his 1969 novel would be called Vito Corleone, and that the town of the same name would be his home town, Corleone's ambitious young gangsters had already put it on the map. In the 1970s, when the first two films of the Godfather trilogy were released, Totò Riina began his rise to power. His leadership marked a new level of violence: not only did he assassinate his criminal rivals on an unprecedented scale, he also targeted anyone who sought to stand in his way. He is believed to be responsible for hundreds of deaths.

> **'Riina was welcomed back with a cordial attitude and this is a dangerous sign'**
>
> **Nicolò Nicolosi**
> *Corleone's mayor*

The impact on Corleone's reputation was devastating. "When in the postwar period the *carabinieri* general Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa, who was sent to Sicily to fight the mafia, arrived in Corleone, he immediately ordered a census of all the families who lived there," said Nicolosi. "He discovered that every single family in Corleone had a relative within the Cosa Nostra clan."

For 50 years Corleone's residents had lived in a kind of mafia fiefdom, where they were terrorised into obedient silence. When the local paper in the 1980s suggested a link between the mafia and a local political figure, its office was firebombed. Nicolosi said it was only after the 2006 arrest of Riina's successor, Provenzano, that people began to express their opinions.

Reduced by arrests, short on cash and foot soldiers, today the Sicilian mafia is weakened, and even in Corleone the atmosphere is different. The main square is dedicated to the judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, whose killings were ordered by Riina, while a large mural of Francesca Morvillo, Falcone's wife who was killed with him in 1992, dominates a school wall. Houses seized from the mafia were turned into hostels, recreational centres for young people and a police station.

And yet, it is not difficult to meet residents, especially among the old generation, who consider Riina a "good man". "I don't understand why the mayor wants Riina out of the town," said a bar owner. "This is his home town."

Some people have exploited mafia stereotypes to attract tourists, such as a cafe transformed into a Godfather film museum, with dozens of posters featuring Marlon Brando as Don Corleone, although the film was not made in the town.

"Sometimes tourists pose in front of a church, convinced that it is where the marriage between Mike Corleone and Apollonia was celebrated," said Liborio Grizzafi, who manages the Intus project in Corleone, which promotes anti-mafia education. "When I explain to them that the film was never shot here, they tell me: 'Dude, don't tell me that, I came from Colombia only for this reason.'"

Riina Jr said he feels "persecuted, oppressed, harassed and targeted for everything he does", after the local authorities allegedly refused to renew his ID.

The day after the council's decision to vote for his removal from the town, he posted a message on Facebook in which he attacked the authorities and promoted his 2016 book, Riina Family Life, bragging about selling the foreign rights.

"While in Corleone they discuss meaningless things like taking me away from home, I continue to achieve new success," he wrote.

The post has hundreds of likes and comments, many from young people in Corleone, expressing affection for his family.

Investigators fear that Riina could try to reorganise the clan, which can still count on an army of mafiosi in the area. "Riina's return takes place at a delicate moment for Corleone," said Marilena Bagarella, the manager of the Laboratory of Legality, an anti-mafia museum. "Attention on the mafia is waning. And this is a problem." She said a revival of the clan would be a catastrophe.

Bagarella is related to members of the clan. When students ask her about the relationship, she tells them: "It doesn't matter what surname you bear, what matters is the path you choose."

# Woman, 95, left fighting for life after being Tasered by police

Christopher Knaus

A frail 95-year-old woman with dementia is fighting for her life after she was shot with a stun gun by police officers after she approached them slowly using a walking frame and carrying a steak knife.

Clare Nowland remains in a critical condition in Cooma district hospital, Australia, after the use of the Taser by officers early on Wednesday morning caused her to fall, hit her head and sustain life-threatening injuries.

New South Wales police confirmed yesterday that the homicide squad was investigating the incident and that the senior constable involved, who had 12 years of experience, is under review and is no longer working.

Nowland was in and out of consciousness and police are treating the matter as a level one critical incident, meaning it involves "an injury that leads to death or imminent death".

Police initially released scant detail on the incident, saying only that an elderly woman in a care facility had "sustained injuries during an interaction" with officers, without any mention of the use of a stun gun.

Yesterday, they said the Taser was used because Nowland was armed with a knife.

Nowland had left her room in the early hours of the morning and gone to the kitchen of Yallambee Lodge, where she found the knife, police said. She was by herself in a small medical treatment room when police arrived. Off-duty officers had been called in to respond as Cooma does not have a 24-hour police station and they arrived some time after paramedics.


▲ *Clare Nowland was carrying a knife and using a walking frame*

Police said the officers tried to negotiate with Nowland. They allege she advanced at them at a "slow pace", using a walking frame. Nowland is 1.6m tall, weighs 43kg and is said to be frail.

Police have footage of the incident, sourced from body-worn cameras, but will not release it publicly.

Peter Cotter, the NSW assistant police commissioner, described the footage as "confronting". He said Tasers were intended for use as self-defence but said he could not "transport myself to the mind of the actual officer or officers" involved.

"At the time she was Tasered she was approaching police, it is fair to say at a slow pace," said Cotter. "She had a walking frame. But she had a knife. I can't take it any further what was going through anyone's mind with the use of a Taser. That is for them."

The internal investigation will be reviewed by NSW police professional standards and monitored by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC).

"No officer, not one of us, is above the law and all our actions will be scrutinised robustly and from a criminal perspective as well as a departmental perspective," Cotter added.

The use of force on Nowland has prompted widespread condemnation and calls for an independent investigation.

Civil liberties groups yesterday demanded an external watchdog, such as the LECC, manage the investigation, rather than the NSW police critical incident team.

"Police should never investigate police," said Josh Pallas, the NSW Council for Civil Liberties president. He added: "The NSW ombudsman and the LECC should initiate an inquiry into this because it transcends issues of police powers with mental health and ageing."

The LECC said it was "independently monitoring" the internal police investigation.

In a short statement, the commission said: "The NSWPF are investigating the circumstances of the incident and the investigation will be reviewed by the Professional Standards Command. The LECC is independently monitoring the investigation under Part 8 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 to ensure public confidence in the investigation."




Handpicked reads

# Sorcery, Spice Girls and social commentary

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WHSmith EST · 1792 | The Guardian

▼ *Lake Urmia in Iran, which has shrunk by 80% in the last 30 years*
PHOTOGRAPH: DOMINIKA ZARZYCKA/ NURPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES



# Half of the world's lakes shrinking due to human use and global heating

**Reuters**

More than half of the world's large lakes and reservoirs have shrunk since the early 1990s - chiefly because of the climate crisis and human consumption - intensifying concerns about water supply for agriculture, hydropower and human use, a study has found.

A team of international researchers reported that some of the world's most important freshwater sources - from the Caspian Sea between Europe and Asia to Lake Titicaca in South America - lost water at a cumulative rate of about 22 gigatonnes a year for nearly three decades, equivalent to the total water use in the US for the entire year of 2015.

Fangfang Yao, a surface hydrologist at the University of Virginia who led the study, published on Thursday in the journal Science, said 56% of the decline in natural lakes was driven by global heating and human use, with warming "the larger share of that".

**53**
*Percentage of large lakes and reservoirs that shrank between 1992 and 2020, experts said*

**22**
*Number of gigatonnes of water lost every year for nearly three decades, equal to total use in the US in 2015*

Climate scientists generally think the world's arid areas will become drier under climate change, and wet areas will get wetter, but the study found significant water loss even in humid regions. "This should not be overlooked," Yao said.

Scientists assessed almost 2,000 large lakes using satellite measurements combined with climate and hydrological models.

They found that unsustainable human use, changes in rainfall and runoff, sedimentation, and rising temperatures had driven lake levels down globally, with 53% of lakes showing a decline from 1992 to 2020.

Nearly 2 billion people are directly affected, and many regions have faced water shortages in recent years.

Scientists and campaigners have long said that global heating cannot exceed 1.5C if we are to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since pre-industrial times.

The study found unsustainable human use dried up lakes, such as the Aral Sea in central Asia and the Dead Sea in the Middle East, while lakes in Afghanistan, Egypt and Mongolia were hit by rising temperatures, which can increase water loss to the atmosphere. Water levels rose in a quarter of the lakes, often as a result of dam construction in remote areas such as the Inner Tibetan Plateau.



# Thousands of Imran Khan's followers arrested as hundreds face hearings in military courts



▲ *Security men surround Imran Khan's car outside Lahore high court*

**Shah Meer Baloch** *Islamabad*
**Hannah Ellis-Petersen** *Delhi*

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has alleged his party and followers are facing an unprecedented crackdown, as thousands have been swept up in arrests and hundreds are facing trial in military courts.

After violence erupted in Pakistan last week, following the arrest of Khan on corruption charges, the government and the military vowed stringent action against all those who took part in the attacks on dozens of government buildings and military leaders' home and headquarters. At least nine people were killed in the violence and hundreds were injured.

Shehbaz Sharif, the prime minister, described those who carried out the violence as "terrorists" and the powerful military establishment said that those responsible for the "heinous crimes" would be tried under military laws. Yesterday Sharif said he had directed law enforcement to "leave no stone unturned" in finding those responsible.

But Khan alleged that it was a thinly veiled excuse to launch a "reign of terror" upon members of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) who were being rounded up across the country. "Under the garb of identifying arsonists, fascist tactics have been employed by these criminals in power to silence and oppress PTI workers and supporters," he said.

The government has accused Khan of sheltering "30 to 40 terrorists" involved in the violence at his Lahore home.

Yesterday evening, a four-member delegation of the Punjab police arrived at Khan's home with a warrant, and began a search in front of the media. PTI said police were given "full cooperation" and that the officers had left "empty handed".

Khan has alleged that the violence of 9 May was carried out by those working for the state and military agencies as a means to tarnish PTI.

Speaking briefly to reporters during a court appearance yesterday he added: "It seems as if all civil liberties and all fundamental rights are finished. Only the courts are protecting human rights now."

Khan was granted bail in several more of the cases, now totalling over 100, filed against him, but alleged the state intended on re-arresting him as soon as they legally could.

Amir Mir, the minister for information, said Khan was the "prime accused" in the violence. He refuted Khan's account that 7,000 had been arrested in the operation and said 3,428 had been detained so far. Mir added that "no one innocent has been arrested" and that using video and CCTV footage, as well as information gathered from WhatsApp groups, police had compiled a list of 25,000 people responsible and intended on arresting about 5,000 who were directly involved in attacks on government and military property.

"There are 800 people we have arrested who will be tried in military courts and anti-terrorism courts," said Mir. "Those who broke into buildings and attacked or set sensitive places on fire will be tried in the military courts."

Senior PTI leaders also continued to be detained en masse, accused of being involved in orchestrating the violence.

Several lawyers and politicians raised concerns over the plans to try the arrested civilians in military courts, which Amnesty condemned as a "violation of international law". Though a law was passed in 2015 allowing terrorists to be tried under army law, such action against civilian protesters on a large scale would be unprecedented in Pakistan.

# 'I want to express rage' Ukrainian female punk band pack fury on tour



◀ *Natalya Seryakova, Anastasiya Khomenko and Mariana Navrotskaya at their band practice*
PHOTOGRAPH: EMRE ÇAYLAK/ THE GUARDIAN

> ***'At school I had to read Dostoevsky. Why? We need to promote our own Ukrainian culture'***
> **Natalya Seryakova**
> *Bass player*

**Luke Harding**
*Kyiv*

When Mariana Navrotskaya first performed Ebalo it was dedicated to her ex-boyfriend. It begins: "I will scratch your fucking face until it bleeds."

These days the lyrics of the hit song are addressed to Vladimir Putin, the man who invaded her country. Her ex, meanwhile, is now in the Ukrainian army. "It's for all the arseholes who try to take my freedom away," she said. "I want to express my anger and rage."

Navrotskaya is the lead vocalist and guitarist in Death Pill, Ukraine's best-known female punk band. She is about to embark on her first European tour, with bass player Natalya Seryakova and drummer and backing singer Anastasiya Khomenko. They play today in Kyiv to raise money for anti-drone weapons. There are also gigs in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. The women describe their sound as a cross between thrash metal and punk.

Critics praise Navrotskaya's "barbed-wire howl" and called them "a face-toasting listen".

"We joke that it's fem-dom. It's music that can kick ass," Seryakova said. The band, formed in 2016, released their debut album in February, a year after Russian tanks and armoured columns began trundling towards Kyiv. They have a growing number of fans and a deal with the London label New Heavy Sounds.

Navrotskaya stayed in Kyiv when Russia launched its full-scale attack. Seryakova went to Adelaide in Australia after being offered a job as a sound director. Khomenko left for Barcelona with her eight-year-old son. On Thursday the band were reunited for the first time since 2022. They rehearsed in a studio in Kyiv, hit twice this week by Russian missiles.

Up close, their music is fast, furious and extremely loud. The band members hugged each other between songs; Navrotskaya wiping away tears. "We are incredibly excited and happy because we will get together to knock out all the shit that has accumulated during this time," the band posted on their Instagram page.

The war has proved an important moment for Ukrainian art. Writers are being translated into English and reaching a global audience. Most groups cannot tour abroad because of a ban on men of military age leaving the country. Death Pill see themselves as heavy metal ambassadors. "Russia is trying to destroy our culture. This has been going on for 300 years. We want to spread news about the war and our resistance to imperialism," Khomenko said.

Two of Death Pill's songs, including Ebalo, were originally sung in the Russian language. The band changed them into English after a backlash on Facebook and added other tracks in Ukrainian.

The musicians turned up to band practice in *Vyshyvankas*, traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts and dresses. They condemned attempts by well-meaning western organisers to promote "peace" by bringing Russians and Ukrainians artists together. "Would we appear on the same stage as a Russian band? Fuck no," Seryakova said. "At school I had to read Dostoevsky. Why? We need to cancel Russian literature and to promote our own Ukrainian culture."

Playing together again is a chance for the band to release the trauma and stress brought on by war. "We have more followers in Europe and the US these days than in Ukraine. I don't know: maybe this is because they want to support us," Khomenko said. She added: "Being Ukrainian is very cool these days. You feel powerful."

*Death Pill are at Retro, Manchester on 11 June, the Louisiana, Bristol on 12 June, Green Door Store in Brighton on 13 June and the Lexington, London, on 14 June*

| FTSE 100 | All share | Dow Indl | Nikkei 225 | £/€ | £/$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| +14.57 | +6.80 | -80.59 | +234.42 | 1.1530 | 1.2437 |
| 7756.87 | 4228.25 | 33455.32 | 30808.35 | +0.0009 | +0.0030 |

# Business

## Fuel bills to fall by £450 a year as Ofgem cuts cap

**Jillian Ambrose**
*Energy correspondent*

Household energy bills are set to fall by about £450 this summer as the regulator prepares to lower its price cap next week, according to analysts.

However, campaigners have warned that the lower cap, to be announced on Thursday, is unlikely to provide much relief to households that struggled to pay bills over the winter because the government's support schemes have come to an end. Households should also expect their energy bills to remain stubbornly high through next winter, at almost double the rates paid in 2020, and remain above pre-pandemic levels for the rest of the decade, according to Cornwall Insight.

Earlier this year energy regulator Ofgem set the price cap at £3,280 annually for the three months from April. However, the government's energy price guarantee (EPG) capped gas and electricity bills at an average of £2,500 for a typical household. Energy bill payers also received a £400 rebate, about £66 a month, spread over six months from October, which helped reduce costs further.

From July this year the standard energy tariffs used by 27m households will once again be decided by a cap calculated by Ofgem based on the cost of supplying energy.

Cornwall Insight has predicted that Ofgem's cap will fall to £2,053 from July to reflect the tumbling cost of gas in the global wholesale markets, representing a saving of approximately £450 compared to the EPG level.

The price cap is expected to remain at similar levels next winter, too, according to Cornwall's analysts. They have predicted that the cap will dip slightly to £1,975 for the three months from October before rising again to reach almost £2,045 for the first quarter of next year.

"Despite the cap falling from the sky-high prices of the past two years, the figure remains over £1,000 per year more than the price cap levels seen prior to the pandemic," Cornwall Insight said.

Reacting to the findings, Martin Lewis, the money saving expert, wrote on Twitter: "If they [Cornwall Insight] are right it means rates for the winter coming will be lower than for the winter gone. However when you factor in there's no longer the £66 a month support, it means lower users will still in practice pay more than last winter, higher users less. And of course prices are far in excess of what they were before the 'energy crisis'."

**£2,500**
*The government's energy price guarantee capped bills at this, but Ofgem is due to cut its cap to £2,053*

Campaigners from the End Fuel Poverty Coalition have warned that households hoping for a sharp drop in their bills may find little difference compared with what they paid over winter. Simon Francis, a coordinator at the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, said: "People now face many more months with bills remaining stubbornly high. This will see them continue to use up their savings for everyday items, run up credit card bills, fall into debt with energy firms or turn to food banks as the cost of living crisis deepens."

Dr Craig Lowrey, principal consultant at Cornwall Insight, said: "Under these predictions, an average consumer would see bills drop by around £450 … this will hopefully bring some cautious optimism that the era of exceptionally high energy bills is behind us. That is unfortunately where the good news ends.

"While bills are falling, the cap is still expected to remain comparatively high against historic norms, and those hoping to see a return to the kinds of bills seen at the start of the decade will be disappointed. Regrettably, it looks as if these prices may become the new normal."

## Jim Ratcliffe climbs to second place on UK rich list

**Mark Sweney**

The Ineos founder, Sir Jim Ratcliffe, has moved up to be the second wealthiest person in Britain, with a near-£30bn fortune - but the number of UK billionaires dropped last year for the first time in 14 years.

Ratcliffe, who is battling to take control of Manchester United football club, is the highest climber in the annual Sunday Times rich list, up 27 places as his chemicals fortune increased by £23.6bn compared with last year, with his net worth estimated at £29.6bn.

The list is topped for a fifth time by Gopi Hinduja and his family, with a fortune estimated at £35bn, up £6.5bn, the largest recorded in the 35-year history of the Sunday Times rankings. This week, SP Hinduja, the billionaire patriarch and chair of the globe-spanning Hinduja Group conglomerate, died in London at the age of 87.

There are 171 billionaires on the list, down six from last year, the first fall recorded since the 2007-08 financial crisis. Overall, the wealth shared by UK billionaires rose to £684bn - £31bn more than last year's rich list.

However, with inflation running at double digits, the 4.5% increase represents a fall in real terms.

One of the biggest fallers is Richard Branson, who has dropped 33 places to 77th after his fortune slumped by 42% to £2.4bn, mainly because of the share price collapse at the satellite venture Virgin Orbit, whose first failed launch from Cornwall has left the business facing bankruptcy.

"Two years ago we raised concerns about an unsettling boom in the fortunes of the very wealthy that continued unchecked during the political instability around Brexit and the pandemic," said Robert Watts, the compiler of the list. "This is not a crash but there are household names who have lost vast sums over the past year. The bursting of the tech bubble, the end of rock-bottom interest rates and the jitters creeping through the banking industry have all taken their toll."

Among the famous names who have made the cut to appear in the expanded list of the UK's 350 wealthiest people are Ed Sheeran, David and Victoria Beckham, Sir Elton John and Andrew Lloyd Webber. A fortune of at least £350m was required to make the cut for this year's rich list.



▲ *Elton John is among the top 350 people in the Sunday Times rich list*



▼ *Jim Ratcliffe of Ineos is worth almost £30bn*
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: BEN GIBSON

## Ministers seek Revolut talks amid licence refusal reports

**Kalyeena Makortoff**
*Banking correspondent*

Senior government ministers have asked to meet the bosses of Britain's most valuable fintech firm, Revolut, amid reports that the company's banking licence application may be refused by City regulators.

The Guardian understands the stated intention of the meeting is to discuss the government's growth agenda, but it comes amid complaints from businesses, including Revolut, over regulatory hurdles their bosses claim could drive firms abroad.

The move follows reports that City regulators inside the Bank of England intend to reject the fintech firm's application for a UK banking licence after Revolut's auditor, BDO, raised concerns over its balance sheet.

BDO said in the company's delayed 2021 annual report, released in February, that auditors were unable to get a complete picture of some of Revolut's revenue and as a result it, or other financial balances, could be "materially misstated".

The meeting - which is likely to involve Treasury and business ministers - will take place in the next week or two, with Revolut expected to be represented by its chief executive, Nik Storonsky, and its chair, the Aberdeen Asset Management co-founder Martin Gilbert.

The government did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Revolut and the Bank of England declined to comment.

Revolut lodged its application for a banking licence more than two years ago. A licence would allow Revolut to hold its own customers' deposits and use them to offer own-branded loans, including mortgages. This would offer a new income stream, probably opening the door to licences in other countries, including the US.

But UK regulators have had a number of reputational issues to consider, with Revolut facing criticism for late filing of accounts, EU regulatory breaches and its corporate culture.

If the firm is approved it is likely to start with a temporary, restricted licence. Known as "mobilisation", this would limit deposit-taking for about 12 months.

The slow pace of the application process has hit a nerve with Revolut bosses, including Storonsky, who recently told the Times that it was "hard to do business in the UK". He also said the company - which became the UK's most valuable fintech firm with a $33bn (£26.5bn) valuation in 2021 - would probably list the company in the US rather than London if it went public.




▼ *Citroën's Ami: the carmaker's owner, Stellantis, aims to build 2m electric vehicles in France by 2030*
PHOTOGRAPH: ED ALCOCK/MYOP

# 'We're going all in' France races ahead with investment in car battery factories

**Jon Henley**
*Europe correspondent*

Forty miles from the coast of Britain, where the government was again told this week that without urgent action it risked losing the electric vehicle race, "Battery Valley" is taking shape in northern France.

Emmanuel Macron's announcement last week that the Taiwanese battery maker ProLogium had chosen Dunkirk for its first foreign facility brings to four the number of gigafactories planned in a corridor stretching about 60 miles (100km) inland from the port.

"We're going all in on this," said Xavier Bertrand, the head of the Hauts-de-France region, once home to many of France's coalmines and much of its steel industry, which has spent more than €200m (£174m) - on top of huge state subsidies - ensuring the investments came its way rather than to rival sites in Poland, the Netherlands and Germany.

"We're in advanced talks with other major players in the sector, too - graphite processing, recycling," Bertrand told Agence France-Presse. "The aim is to have the whole chain here; it's a strategic choice. This is a decade of transformation and we need to be in the vanguard."

Battery Valley has the enthusiastic support of the French president, who this week unveiled a raft of green measures and tax credits - including electric vehicle (EV) subsidies - aimed at attracting billions of euros in new investment to "reindustrialise" France, create jobs and increase manufacturing from 10% of the country's economic output to 15%.

"There's obviously a deep-rooted tradition in France of using a combination of hard money and soft support for industry in this way - far more so, generally speaking, than there is in Britain," said a UK-based expert on the European automotive industry, who asked not to be named.

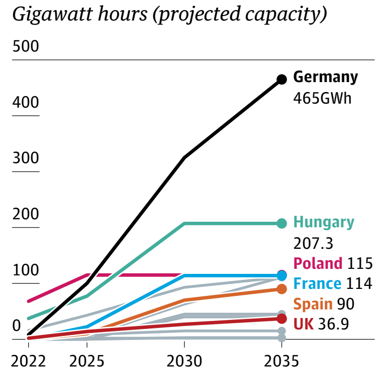
"It's just particularly apparent at times like these," said the insider. "France is developing a proper, thought-through industrial policy for the green transition. If it all plays out as planned, its EV battery cluster in northern France will be one of the biggest, if not the biggest, in Europe."

By 2030, the European Commission estimates, between 33m and 40m electric cars will be on the EU's roads. Five years later, the bloc will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles. In France, sales of EVs already account for 15% of the market.

The country's carmakers, Renault and Stellantis - which owns Peugeot and Citroën, as well as Opel and Fiat - have promised to build at least 2m EVs in France before 2030, and they will all need batteries.

ProLogium's plant, the largest of the four northern gigafactories announced to date, represents an

**Projected UK electric car battery production lags behind other European countries**
*Gigawatt hours (projected capacity)*

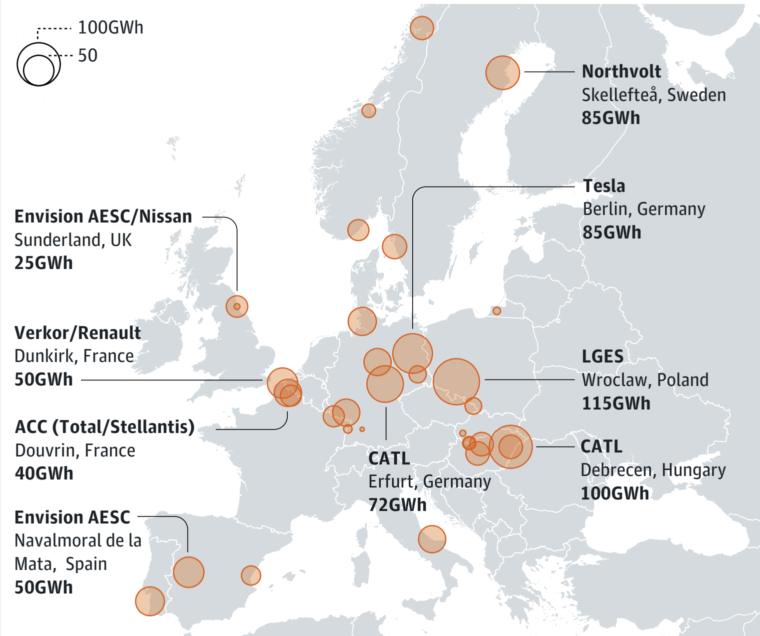



Source: Benchmark Mineral Intelligence. 2022 is an observed value. 2035 projections for countries shown in grey are: Norway 111, Sweden 111, Portugal 45, Italy 40, Czech Rep 15, Russia 3, Slovakia 2



**France is set to become one of the biggest battery manufacturers in Europe**

*Planned European gigafactory outputs by 2030, GWh*




Source: Benchmark Mineral Intelligence

***'The aim is to have the whole chain here. This is a decade of transformation and we need to be in the vanguard'***

**Xavier Bertrand**
*Hauts-de-France leader*

investment of €5.2bn. By 2030, a planned workforce of 3,000 should be producing about 48 gigawatt hours (GWh) of batteries on its 180-hectare (445-acre) brownfield site in Dunkirk, enough to power 500,000 to 750,000 cars a year.

Also based near the port is Verkor, a French startup investing €2.5bn in a gigafactory that in its first phase will employ 800 people. Production there is due to start in 2025, with an initial capacity of 16GWh, rising to 50GWh - powering up to 1m cars, mostly built by Renault - each year.

ACC, founded by Stellantis, TotalEnergies and Mercedes, plans to open its €4bn mega-plant in Douvrin as early as the end of this month, with the first batteries coming off the production line in early summer. It is targeting 1,000 employees by 2025, with an initial capacity of about 13.4GWh, rising to 40GWh five years later.

About 18 miles down the road in Douai will be Envision AESC, a Chinese-owned gigafactory being built on the site of a 50-year-old Renault plant that the partly state-owned company is devoting entirely to EV production. By 2025 it aims to be producing 9GWh of batteries a year for Renault, climbing to 30GWh by 2029.

Germany's carmakers this week joined calls for an extension of a Brexit trade deadline by three years to avoid a 10% price rise on EVs that cross the Channel to the UK, after Ford, Stellantis and Jaguar Land Rover warned the British government that rules on where parts were sourced from threatened the future of the UK car industry.

The Brexit trade deal struck between the UK and EU at the end of 2020 contained "rules of origin" aimed at boosting domestic EV battery production to reduce dependence on Asian imports, but new factories have not sprung up quickly enough, meaning some carmakers may face the prospect of tariffs on exports in January.

Stellantis has said that without action it could be forced to shut some of its UK operations. The chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, has insisted the UK "needs to have that supply [of batteries] here in the UK", adding: "Watch this space, because we are very focused on making sure the UK gets that EV manufacturing capacity."

Hunt has offered Jaguar Land Rover, one of Britain's biggest manufacturers, £500m in subsidies in an effort to persuade its owner, the Indian conglomerate Tata, to choose the UK over Spain for a new gigafactory.

France's attractiveness is based on several factors, Gilles Lenormand, ProLogium's director of international development, told reporters last week on a visit to the site of the Taiwanese company's future gigafactory with Macron.



▲ *Emmanuel Macron, left, visits a factory in Dunkirk earlier this week*

Lenormand said ProLogium was insistent on low-carbon electricity, available in Dunkirk through France's nuclear network and offshore windfarms.

"But equally important, there's a real industrial cluster of EV battery activity building momentum in the north of the country," he said. "That means we should very rapidly attain a critical mass that will see raw material and component suppliers establishing themselves there too. It becomes an ecosystem."

Finally, Lenormand said, the region around Dunkirk offered "real proximity to our customers, because there are a large number of EV manufacturers in northern Europe. The rail and road connections are excellent and Dunkirk is a deepwater port, which we need for imports and exports."

For the region itself, a symbol of France's industrial decline, the transition could be vital. After the shutdown of its mines and most of its steel plants, the Hauts-de-France - formerly the Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Picardy - became the centre of the country's car industry, home to three Renault factories, three Stellantis plants and a big Toyota facility.

But unemployment remains more than 20% higher than the national average, helping ensure it has become one of the heartlands of Marine Le Pen and her far-right Rassemblement National. Dunkirk alone has lost 6,000 industrial jobs in the past 20 years, authorities say.

Estimates for the number of jobs Battery Valley could help create in the longer term range from 15,000 to 30,000. "Gigafactories are just the first step," Luc Messien of the regional car industry association told Le Monde. "Essentially, we're aiming for the industrial transition of the entire region."

Ultimately, industry experts predict, if all four French gigafactories are up and running as planned by 2030, France will become a leading European battery hub, by which time Chinese output - currently accounting for as much as 80% of Europe's EV batteries - should have fallen to nearer 60%, and the EU's risen to 25%.

Several countries are competing for the sector's favours, and offering huge subsidies. According to some reports, ProLogium may be receiving as much as €1.5bn from France, while Germany has promised €1bn in state support to Northvolt to help persuade the Swedish company to build a new plant in the country's east.

Other EU states are equally active: China's CATL, the world's largest battery maker, is producing in east Germany and building a €7bn factory in Hungary, while Envision has opted for Spain. Britain's hopes were hit by the recent collapse of BritishVolt, acquired in February by an Australian company that has yet to build a major project.

That leaves the UK with just one gigafactory being built - near Nissan's plant in Sunderland. While Britain is barely in the running, France's bid to compete with China in the battery race is well under way.

# Jaguar Land Rover owner is offered £500m lure to build UK gigafactory

**Mark Sweney**
**Jasper Jolly**

The government has offered the parent company of Jaguar Land Rover £500m in subsidies in an effort to persuade the carmaker to build a battery plant in the UK.

The chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, has offered a package of incentives to entice JLR's owner, days after three global carmakers said rules on where parts were sourced threatened the future of the UK automotive industry.

The Indian conglomerate Tata, the parent company of JLR, is deciding whether to build the gigafactory in the UK or Spain.

The Treasury package includes a cash grant and reductions in energy costs as well as covering the cost of upgrading the power network and transport connections around the site in Somerset, a government source said. The Times first reported that the government was willing to meet Tata's request for £500m, after months of negotiations.

The government has also offered Tata a £300m package to help upgrade and decarbonise the Port Talbot steelworks in south Wales.

Last year, Natarajan Chandrasekaran, the chair of Tata, said that if the group could not negotiate significant subsidies to help transition the plant's blast furnaces to greener production methods it would "have to look at closures of sites".

The Port Talbot site employs about 3,500 people and is one of only two plants in Britain capable of turning iron ore and coal into iron and steel. Overall, the subsidiary Tata Steel UK employs about 8,000 people.

The £500m offer to JLR's owner represents a big commitment from the government, with the budget for its automotive transformation fund, to support the shift to electric vehicles, currently only £1bn.

The government tends to support large automotive factory investments with subsidies worth between 10% and 20% of the costs. Ministers have come under intense political pressure to support a gigafactory to supply JLR because it owns more factories in the UK than any other carmaker.

JLR's chief executive, Adrian Mardell, last week said that the company would retain its car factories in the UK even if Tata built the gigafactory in Spain. However, many auto industry analysts are concerned that a failure to produce batteries in the UK will make future investments less attractive. The UK only has one gigafactory under construction, by Chinese-owned Envision AESC near Nissan's Sunderland car plant.

Post-Brexit rules require 40% of an electric vehicle's parts by value to be sourced in the UK or EU if it is to be sold across the Channel without a 10% trade tariff. This proportion is due to rise to 45% next year, and by 2027 carmakers must source the entire battery pack from within the EU or UK to avoid export tariffs.

**£1bn**
*Total budget of the government's automotive transition fund to support the shift to electric vehicles*

**£300m**
*Package offered to Tata to help upgrade and decarbonise the Port Talbot steelworks in south Wales*

# Nationwide to pay £340m to customers after record profits

**Kalyeena Makortoff**
*Banking correspondent*

Nationwide will pay £340m directly into customer accounts for the first time, after a jump in deposits and higher interest rates drove annual profits up 40% to record highs.

Britain's biggest building society has tended to use profits to offer better rates on savings, loans and mortgages for its members, but yesterday it launched an inaugural programme that will distribute funds directly to customers, akin to shareholder payouts made by banks.

The payout, which amounts to about 15% of its annual profits, will benefit 3.4 million eligible customers, who will receive about £100 directly into their accounts in June.

Nationwide's chief executive, Debbie Crosbie, said plans for the payout were influenced by the recent rise in living costs: "We don't see anyone else doing this, as such, and we think … it was really important to get people cash where we could, and we think it will have the most impact."

Nationwide reported a 40% jump in annual pre-tax profits to £2.2bn, topping its previous high of £1.6bn a year earlier. It benefited from the rise in interest rates, which allowed lenders to charge more for loans.

Unlike listed banks, building societies are owned by their customers rather than shareholders. Nationwide said it now planned payouts for members every year, provided this did not harm its financial position.

To be eligible, members must use Nationwide as their main current account and have one other product - either a savings account or a mortgage - with a minimum £100 balance.

The mutual also announced the launch of a two-year bond product that will pay out 4.75%, surpassing the Bank of England's base rate.

It put aside £765m to cover a potential increase in defaults by customers, up £19m on a year earlier. However, it said the number of people behind on payments was still low given that many were on fixed rates and few had high levels of debt to repay.

# Money

## Festivals

# Get your summer music fix without paying the earth



As the season kicks off, rising bills threaten to dampen spirits. **Molly Raycraft** and **Rupert Jones** have insider tips for the outdoor fun

The cost of living crisis may be biting hard but what is almost certainly Britain's most expensive music festival - costing up to £325 a person for only one afternoon and evening's entertainment - doesn't seem to be having any problems shifting tickets.

Soho House festival, taking place in Gunnersbury Park, west London, on two separate days, 6 and 8 July, has already sold out its first day, and its well-heeled clientele can look forward to sets from the likes of DJ Pete Tong, Kelis, Tom Grennan and Sugababes. To be fair, that hefty price (the event only runs from 2pm until 10.30pm) includes unlimited food and drink.

The outdoor music festival season has kicked off this month with a number of events but really gets going in June, with the biggie, Glastonbury - whose headliners this year include Arctic Monkeys, Guns N' Roses and Elton John - taking place on 21-25 June.

There are scores of events in July and August, including Latitude in Suffolk (20-23 July), where the lineup includes Pulp, Paolo Nutini and George Ezra, and Reading and Leeds (on 25-27 August, with big names playing including Billie Eilish and Sam Fender), before things finally wind up at the end of September.

The good news is that if you don't have a spare £325 knocking about, there are dozens of cheaper and free events around, some of which have pretty good lineups.

Here we round up some of the options and talk to regulars about the insider tips that can cut costs.

### Cutting ticket costs

Glastonbury might have sold out in a flash as usual but with lots of events jostling for attention this year and people tightening their belts, special offers are virtually guaranteed as summer nears. So monitor ticket websites and sites such as Festival Flyer, check festival online forums, and keep an eye out for flash sale emails.

Meanwhile, Tickets for Good partners with festivals such as Tramlines in Sheffield, Parklife in Manchester and Truck in Oxfordshire to provide free and heavily discounted tickets to NHS staff, medical students and charity sector workers, plus their friends, with plans to extend eligibility further.

"In addition to the people already listed, anyone who has received a cost of living payment is welcome to sign up for our waiting list. Tickets will be made available to them very soon," says Steve Rimmer, the chief executive and co-founder of Tickets for Good, which has so far saved more than 200,000 people an estimated £6m. For most tickets, recipients will only have to cover the booking fee, which costs £2-£3.95 a ticket.

For those who aren't eligible for schemes such as this, it can pay to plan ahead by securing early bird tickets, which are often cheaper, while some festivals offer payment plans allowing people to spread the cost. Group ticket deals (for example, six for the price of five) are also sometimes available.

### Free (or almost free) gigs

- Africa Oyé in Sefton Park, Liverpool, on 17-18 June. Free entry, and a lineup that includes Seun Kuti & Egypt 80.
- Festival Too, a free, unticketed event held in King's Lynn, Norfolk, over three weekends: 24-25 June, 30 June-1 July and 7-8 July. The lineup will be announced soon.
- Coventry's Godiva festival in War Memorial Park on 30 June-2 July. At the time of writing, day tickets started at £8, with concessionary prices available to those who qualify. Acts playing include Melanie C, Rudimental, the Enemy, Ella Eyre and the Selecter.
- Leigh folk festival in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, on 22-25 June. Almost all the events are free, with the exception of some ticketed concerts. Acts playing include She'koyokh and Emily Portman & Rob Harbron.



▲ *Can't afford the pricey ticket? Volunteer for work to get in for free*

### A more affordable option

Festivals hosting big names have become too pricey for many people.

Glastonbury tickets have gone up from £265 plus a £5 booking fee in 2019 to £335 plus a £5 booking fee for the 2023 edition, while a weekend ticket to Reading will typically set you back £289 once you have added on the fees.

However, filling the gap is an influx of good-value tribute act festivals such as Rockstock in Stockport (27-28 May - £20 for two days) and Festwich in Prestwich, Manchester (29-30 July - £24 for two days).

While the bands may not be the real deal, it is a cheap opportunity to enjoy familiar songs and get into the festival spirit.

"I think some people are generally sceptical about tribute bands," concedes Chris Tominey from Iffy Clyro (a Biffy Clyro tribute band).

"I was never keen on the idea myself but when you go to a show, you realise quite quickly that the vibe is amazing. The standard of bands is incredibly high."

### Make it a holiday

By looking farther afield, you can condense the cost of a festival and a holiday into one.

"People think travelling abroad for events is expensive but I'd say the UK is worse," says Bekah, known on TikTok as Festival Styled (@festivalstyled). She has garnered a big following by sharing her experiences, including price breakdowns for her journeys abroad.

She books her trips using the Skyscanner search engine and tries to plan several months in advance and opt for one weekend abroad during a month rather than a few nights out in the UK.

"Try hostels and go to cheaper places in Europe. I love Poland and Latvia," she says.




▲ *Get a press pass by covering an event for websites and publications*

### Use social media

If you are into a specific genre of music, there are ways of getting free tickets. Maria Jones from Aberdeen is a trance music fan, and over the years she has kept in the know with labels, artists and venues by signing up to newsletters, following people on Twitter and listening to podcasts focused on the genre.

"It is worthwhile following all your artists and interacting with them on Twitter and creating these opportunities for yourself," Jones says. She recalls a time when she was scrolling through Twitter and stumbled across a tweet offering

**Money hacks**
**How to take a super low-budget holiday**
*Page 51*

**Fantasy house hunt**
**Five of the best close to the sea**
*Page 52*







▲ *With rising bills at home and at festivals, there are some neat tricks to avoid spending a fortune*
PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS/PETER CZIBORRA

free VIP tickets for the first 20 retweeters to an event in London. She ended up getting a free ticket.

## Stand out from the crowd

Jones recalls: "I ended up getting dressed as a gothic Minnie Mouse for dance music festival SW4 in London, and that led to DJ Gareth Emery noticing us from the stage and giving us VIP passes."

She recommends checking Twitter every now and again during events as they sometimes tweet out opportunities for perks while the event is happening. Meanwhile, smaller websites and publications are often looking for feet on the ground when it comes to events. Jones has offered to cover events for publications and blogs in return for a press pass, giving her access to the event and an opportunity to meet artists.



▲ *Get festival friendly outfits secondhand or from charity shops*

## There and back

Getting to and from festivals can sometimes be challenging and costly. Travelling by coach is often the cheapest option, although be prepared for a longer journey.

Check if your event has an option to add a coach journey on to your ticket. Big Green Coach usually collects festival-goers from designated spots to transport them out to the fields and back home again at a reasonable price.

## Right kit, right price

Festival-friendly outfits often have a high turnover on secondhand sites and at charity shops, so check their selections regularly and you may be able to grab a bargain.

If it's a multi-day event, there's camping equipment to consider. You may be able to borrow some from a friend, family member or neighbour.

Check out sites such as Facebook Marketplace and keep an eye out at Lidl and Aldi, as they sometimes run summer special deals on tents, camping chairs and everything in between.

## Work while you're there …

If there's a festival you would like to go to but really can't afford, it may be worth checking if there are any work opportunities, although in some cases it may be too late for this year.

"It's possible to get work assisting with setting up the site, bar work, artists and performers, traders, site takedown, litter picking, etc," Louise Sheridan says. "I get a free ticket in return for working some shifts."

Sheridan gets access to events by volunteering with CND, which is involved with festivals such as Glastonbury and Shambala. "Other charities that also offer volunteer places in return for working shifts include Oxfam (stewards) and WaterAid."

Meanwhile, some festivals run schemes where you can get cash for returning items such as plastic cups. Last year, GALA Festival in Peckham Rye Park, south London, gave customers £1 for every cup returned, which resulted in some festival-goers making a sizeable amount.

## Ditch the booze

Not buying alcohol will obviously cut your costs hugely. Jones says booze is not necessary to enjoy a night of good music, and highlights another benefit. She adds: "If you're sober, when people go to get drinks, you can keep moving forward to the front."



◀ *As NHS wait times increase, it's tempting to buy an at-home test*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

# Fertility test kits

# Cheap and easy, but do they do more harm than good?

They are now a big moneyspinner but doctors say it's vital they are used with expert guidance, as **Sarah Marsh** reports

Growing numbers of people are buying at-home fertility tests despite concern from some leading doctors that these products may cause already anxious would-be parents to worry needlessly about their ability to have children. They also say there's an urgent need for better regulation.

Sales of Superdrug's at-home hormone tests have tripled since December. The health and beauty retailer also offers consultations with online doctors, with average weekly bookings rising fivefold. Meanwhile, health company Randox has reported "considerable growth" in sales of its kits.

Most firms offer testing for the anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH), which can help assess the number of follicles inside the ovaries, and progesterone, an important hormone in the menstrual cycle.

It comes amid long NHS waiting lists after the pandemic effectively closed many non-essential services. Several hundred thousand women are on the list to see an NHS gynaecologist, with the average wait up from 6.9 weeks pre-Covid to more than 14.

Fertility is big business. This weekend, London's Olympia plays host to the Fertility Show Live, where would-be parents can talk to experts, attend seminars and check out new products.

At-home tests vary in price. For example, Superdrug offers a range of products including an AMH blood test kit costing £76.99, a progesterone test kit at £39.99 and a combo test pack for £97.99. An at-home hormone and fertility test from Hertility is £149.

However, some experts fear that while the kits sold by retailers have benefits because they can be conducted cheaply at home, they must also be used with care. Doctors say that if the test is not done alongside expert guidance, it can cause unnecessary stress.

There is some regulation. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency does not approve medical devices - including these kits - although manufacturers have to register them. It is understood the regulator assesses them for accuracy. However, there is no oversight of the medical advice or healthcare implications. The fertility regulator, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), says the kits do not fall within its remit. Dr Ippokratis Sarris, director and consultant in reproductive medicine at King's Fertility, says there has been growth in technology aimed at women's health, but that it raises "scientific and ethical issues".

**14 weeks**
*The average NHS waiting time to see a gynaecologist, up from 6.9 weeks pre-pandemic*

**£149**
*The cost of an at-home hormone and fertility test kit from Hertility. Prices vary between the companies*

He says the positives of at-home testing are that it is affordable and easy. But, he adds, services need to be regulated, as many tests do not take someone's clinical history into account and that, without context, results can be hard to understand.

Dr Channa Jayasena, head of andrology at Imperial College London, says that, in some ways, these tests can save time and money. But the key question is making sure people are aware of what tests they need to do. "If someone is anxious, they can overcheck these things and potentially waste a lot of money."

Jayasena adds that hormone levels are always changing, and some tests won't be effective unless carried out at the correct time of day or menstrual cycle. People do not know this, he warns, and firms do not always advertise it. "That is wrong," he says.

Rachel Cutting, the director of compliance and information at the HFEA, says people with fertility problems should speak to their GP.

Meanwhile, Sarah Norcross, director of the charity Progress Educational Trust, says it is "concerning" that women are increasingly self-testing rather than consulting their GP. "This indicates there is a failure in addressing the issues women face when it comes to their reproductive health."

However, Helen O'Neill, a lecturer in reproductive and molecular genetics, and a co-founder of the self-testing company Hertility, says that long NHS waiting times mean "people have decided to take matters into their own hands instead of waiting for GP referrals".

She adds: "Women don't want to have to jump through hoops, wait for long periods to be seen, or pay through the nose to better understand their bodies and take action if there's anything that needs to be addressed."

That is why she started Hertility, she says, adding that it "never tests hormones in isolation … we interpret them while taking into account your age, medical history (including pre-existing conditions), menstrual cycle patterns, lifestyle habits such as smoking, drinking, etc, all of which are known to impact hormone levels".

Superdrug told us that with its tests, "people have access to professional advice and support from our team of doctors to discuss their results in greater detail, enabling them to have a more informed understanding".

# Mortgages

## Switch and fix 'to save up to £400 a month'

**Rupert Jones**

The average "standard variable rate" (SVR) for mortgages has climbed to its highest level for more than 15 years, so many people sitting on one could save several hundred pounds a month by switching to a fixed-rate deal.

That was one of the key takeaways from data issued this week that also signalled rates on new fixed-rate deals may start to rise again.

A series of Bank of England rate rises - 12 since December 2021 - and the chaos triggered by last September's Liz Truss government mini-budget, mean it has been a stressful and costly time for millions of people with a mortgage or for those looking for one.

However, financial data provider Moneyfacts says the home loans market "is showing positive signs of resilience and growth". It pointed to the fact that the total number of mortgage products available has more than doubled since last October, jumping from 2,258 then to 5,264 this month.

Meanwhile, the average rates on new two- and five-year fixed deals have fallen, to 5.26% and 4.97% respectively earlier this month. But that probably won't provide much cheer to those looking to replace a fixed-rate deal that is coming to an end now, or soon, who typically face much higher monthly costs.

In May 2021, the average new two-year fixed mortgage rate stood at 2.57%, and is now at least double that. Similarly, the average five-year fixed rate in May 2018 stood at 2.91%, but is now more than two percentage points higher.

Soaring interest rates mean that many of the million or so people sitting on their lender's SVR - which borrowers typically go on to when a deal ends - should urgently think about moving to a cheaper product.

SVRs vary dramatically across the market, but they have all been going up, and the average rate has climbed to 7.37%, according to Moneyfacts. That is the highest since December 2007.

Separate data from Compare the Market found that homeowners on an SVR could typically save up to £401 a month by switching to a fixed-rate deal - the equivalent of £4,812 a year.

The site says it is urging homeowners who are either coming to the end of their initial fixed-rate, or are already sitting on an SVR, "to take a look at what their options may be".

It adds: "With the average mortgage debt in the UK at just over £257,000, homeowners who are soon coming to the end of a fixed rate could soon be paying hundreds of pounds more each month if they roll on to a lender's average SVR rate."

Compare the Market looked at someone with what it said was an average mortgage debt of £257,815 and a 30-year term. An SVR of 7.37% would see them paying £1,780 a month - but if they switched to a five-year fix at 4.97%, they would see this fall to £1,379. If they opted for a two-year fix at 5.26%, the new monthly payment would be £1,425.



▲ Fix on the fact the standard variable rate is now at a 15-year high

# Consumer champions

**Miles Brignall**



## RAC drove off with my car … now it's disappeared

**I am in a really bizarre situation. Having recovered my broken-down car, the RAC has effectively lost it and, 16 days on, has no idea where it is.**

**In April, while in Devon, the clutch went on my Honda. Having been a member for about 20 years, I called the RAC. It said it could not be fixed at the roadside. I asked for the car to be taken to my home and was told it would take three days. That was the last time I saw it.**

**It is now 16 days later and no one can tell me where my car is. All it says is that it should have arrived 3-5 days after the breakdown.**

**In the end I reported it stolen, to police, and my insurer. The latter has provided me with a hire car, so at least I am back on the road. I can't quite believe this is happening.**
**AR,** *Berkshire*

A decade ago we generally received more letters praising the RAC than complaints, but it is very much the opposite these days.

The day before I took up your case, the car was mysteriously delivered back without any explanation. However, you soon realised the rear window wasn't the original, and that its de-mist function didn't work.

It appears the third-party recovery operator, contracted by the RAC to deliver the car, somehow managed to smash the window, and the delay had been caused by the time it took to source a replacement.

Had the RAC/its contractor come clean at the start, it would have saved you a huge amount of hassle - and expense. Now you have told your insurer that the vehicle has been found, it has decided you were not entitled to its courtesy car and will bill you for its supply.

As a result of my intervention, the RAC has agreed to send someone to repair the de-mist function. It has also apologised and agreed to reimburse your car hire costs. It still hasn't offered an explanation. "This wasn't handled by our contractor in the way it should have been and falls far below the standard we expect from our partners, which we've addressed with them directly," it says. Bizarre indeed.



▶ *On the road to nowhere: when the RAC set out to return a broken-down car home, it simply disappeared*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY

## Delayed? A CIV rail ticket could be the missing link

**Two weeks ago I caught a train from Stafford to London Euston that was due to arrive in time to catch a Eurostar to Brussels.**

**There was a fatality on the line at Rugby, and all trains were cancelled going into London. I ended up having to change my ticket which cost £125. Eurostar said the incident wasn't on its service, so it wasn't its responsibility.**
**CC,** *Stafford*

While I have a great deal of sympathy, I don't think Eurostar is responsible, as you bought two separate train tickets. Had you been travelling to Heathrow to get a flight you missed, you wouldn't expect the airline to give you a free alternative flight. Your travel insurance should cover this.

The reason for running this letter is to tell you about little-known tickets that would have covered you. A CIV ticket would oblige Eurostar to put you on the next train for free. You can only buy them in person at a staffed station (not online) and you need to show your Eurostar booking to qualify.

In London, a CIV ticket ensures that, in the outward direction, if the UK train arrives into London late, Eurostar must honour the ticket and place the passenger on the next available Eurostar train. In the homeward direction, if Eurostar arrives into London late and a connection to a booked UK train is missed, the UK operator must accept the ticket on its next service. Tickets also include an underground connection.

But The Man in Seat Sixty-One website warns that ticket office staff aren't always familiar with London International CIV fares and you may have to ask.

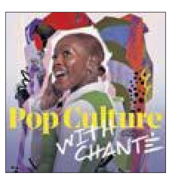
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ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE WIGNALL

# Money hacks How to take a super-low budget holiday

Harriet Meyer

## Look after people's pets

Your holiday dreams may have been put on hold as household bills soar but there are creative ways to book a break on a super-low budget if you are willing to think outside the box.

If you are an animal lover, for example, you could sign up to a house-sitting website that enables you to stay for free in homes around the world. All you need to do is look after other people's pets and homes. Websites such as TrustedHousesitters and Nomador match you with people who need someone to care for their pets and property while they are away.

You will typically pay an annual fee for unlimited house sits. For example, TrustedHousesitters charges from £99 a year, and if you don't secure any sits within 14 days of making your fifth application you will get your money back.

## Sign up for discounts

You can get big discounts on flights by signing up to Jack's Flight Club newsletters. You get an email every few days with the best deals and details of airline sales.
At the time of writing, it was showing return flights from Manchester to Goa for £212.
You could also try Travelzoo, Hotukdeals and HolidayPirates for flight and holiday deals but you will need to book quickly.

Meanwhile, try signing up to get money back on travel offers from cashback websites such as TopCashback and Quidco. TopCashback was, at the time of writing, offering 10% cashback on bookings made through Expedia.

However, Vix Leyton, a consumer expert at Hotukdeals, says: "Resorts and hotels are desperate to swerve aggregators, so it's also worth trying to deal direct if you find a bargain. As well as the potential for a cheaper price, they may offer you anything from credits to spend on-site to free breakfast."

## Home swaps

If you are willing to let strangers stay in your home, try one or more of the house swap websites. You will typically get a free trial period lasting a few weeks, so you can see what homes are on offer. You will then pay about £100 a year for as many home swaps as you like. Check out Love Home Swap, HomeLink and Guardian Home Exchange.

You will usually need to list your home's details first, and then you can search for accommodation. If you can find a week that suits you when your host is also away, you can sort out your home swap. You may get access to a car, too, so you don't have to pay car rental costs.

Another big advantage is that you will have access to a kitchen. Making your own meals can dramatically cut costs.

## Be flexible on flights

Many flight prices have risen sharply but there are still ways to get a deal. Start by using one of the flight price comparison sites. Check out Kayak, Momondo, Skyscanner, Google Flights, Dohop and Fly.com. Some cover more airlines than others, so it is worth searching a few and comparing prices for the same flight.

If you are really flexible, try searching anytime and anywhere to get the cheapest options.

Consider the time of year for where you want to travel, too, and plan ahead if you can. January, for example, is usually the cheapest time to fly to Barcelona.

## Stay in hostels

There are plenty of comfortable hostels around the world that appeal to travellers of all ages. Many offer private rooms, facilities such as swimming pools and breakfast included for often super-low prices. Search the Hostelworld and YHA websites for budget travel options around the globe.

The cheapest option if you are an adventurous traveller, or going on a walking holiday, is to camp.

> *'Try dealing direct.... you may be offered a credit to spend'*
>
> **Vix Leyton**
> *Hotukdeals*

However, if you are not a fan of camping, or you are looking for cheap stays in remote places, you could try the Mountain Bothies Association.

## Maybe don't fly?

Jane Hawkes, the founder of the consumer rights website Lady Janey, says: "Consider travelling by train, ferry, car or coach instead of flying abroad." Sleeper trains can offer comfortable overnight travel to your destination for a fraction of the cost, she adds.

You can travel through Europe on overnight trains. For example, you can go from Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam to Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. Check out Nightjet's routes and the Man in Seat Sixty-One for suggested routes and to start planning your trip.

Hawkes says: "If you're heading for France or Belgium, check out the latest deals and offers on the Channel tunnel and ferry crossings. FlixBus offers cheap bus travel across Europe, and tickets for travelling with Eurotunnel cover your vehicle and up to nine passengers."

You can compare ferry prices at Direct Ferries before booking directly with the ferry operator.

## Grab a package deal

Choosing a package deal that includes travel and accommodation is one of the easiest ways to cut costs. Sites such as TravelSupermarket and Kayak are simple places to start.

If you book a package holiday you don't have to eat at the hotel and take a particular flight. Package deals can simply be a good way of getting a rock-bottom deal, and come with consumer protection under the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018.

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◀ **Mevagissey, Cornwall**
**£1.95m**
Overlooking the bustling fishing village is Compass Point, a contemporary curved white house with clifftop views that stretch to the Chapel Point, Fowey Harbour, and the Rame Peninsula. The three-bedroom property was built in 2014 with an open-plan living area on the lower-ground floor with wraparound, multiple, floor-to-ceiling windows and doors that lead out on to an infinity terrace - from which the owners say they have seen kestrels nesting on the cliffs and dolphins, seals and basking sharks (on occasion) in the sea.
*Knight Frank, 01392 84 8856*



# Fantasy house hunt
## Five of the best close to the sea

**Compiled by Anna White**

▶ **Fishguard, Pembrokeshire**
**£695,000**
This pastel blue end-of-terrace, built in the early 1900s, was first a home and then a hotel before the owners decided to retire from making breakfast for guests every morning and enjoy the seaside. It has 10 bedrooms, eight bathrooms, an industrial kitchen and a pine-clad bar room, and is ripe for renovation. From its elevated site, the road slopes down to the coastal path where there are views of the 18th-century Fishguard Fort (last used in the second world war), the harbour and Goodwick sea wall.
*Savills 02920 368 915*



▲ **Ilfracombe, Devon**
**£795,000**
Overlooking the countryside and sea is a Victorian end-of-terrace house with five bedrooms and a wealth of period details. Throughout the property are cast-iron radiators, decorative cornicing and ceiling roses. The garden is wrapped in a wall of reclaimed stone and there is a north-facing timber terrace from which you can see the rugged coastline.
*Inigo 020 3687 3071*

▼ **Whitby, Yorkshire**
**£725,000**
With planning permission secured for change of use from a B&B to a residential home, this seven-bedroom, seven-bathroom Victorian townhouse covers five floors. Steep paths wind down from the bustling streets of the West Cliff area to the sandy beach. There are also views across to the abbey, said to have been the inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula. *Carter Jonas 01904 937 733*



◀ **Mortehoe, Devon**
**£1.3m**
Down a private lane and set back from the cliff edge between the popular surfing spot of Woolacombe and the harbour town of Ilfracombe, is a five-bedroom, three-bathroom property built in the 1930s but extended in the 1980s, now on the market for the first time in half a century. It covers 288 sq metres (3,104 sq ft) with an entrance hall that leads into the open-plan living-dining room. There's views over the sea and open countryside under the care of the National Trust. Clifftop paths run to viewpoints such as Morte Point and Bull Point, with Exmoor within easy reach. *Stags 01271 322 833*



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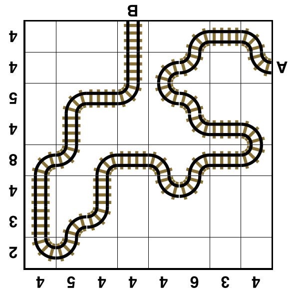
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# Puzzles

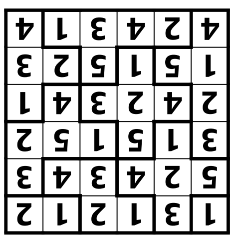
## Solutions



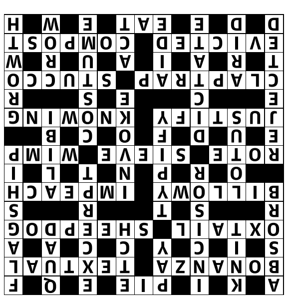
Train tracks

Word wheel

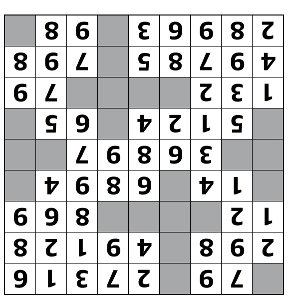
COURGETTE



Suguru



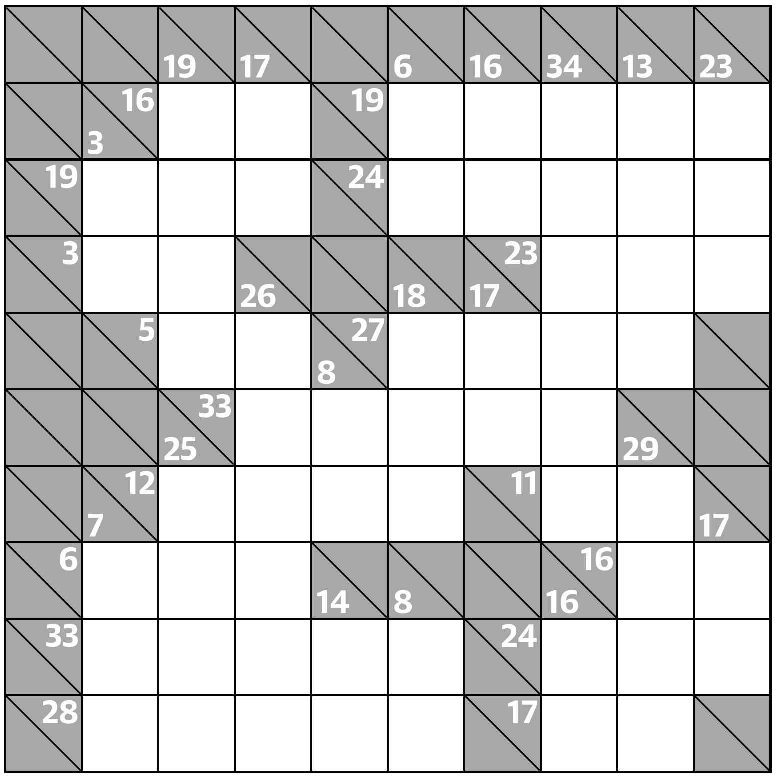
Codeword



Kakuro

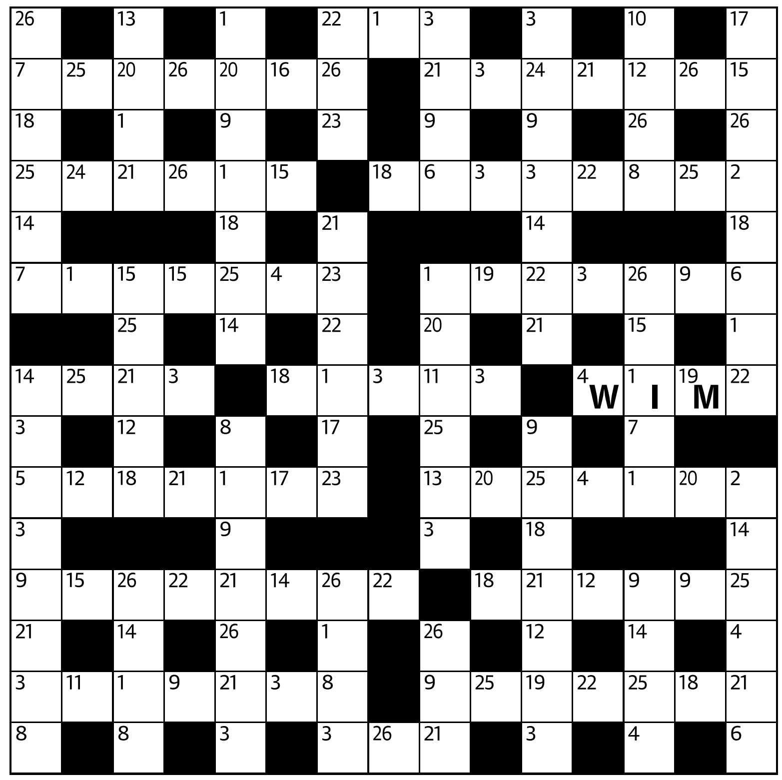
## Kakuro

*Fill the grid so that each block adds up to the total in the box above or to the left of it. You can only use the digits 1-9 and you must not use the same number twice in a block.*

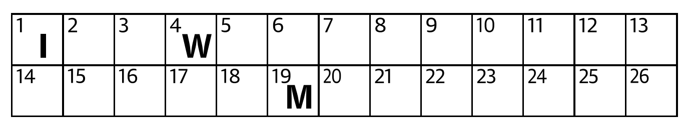


## Codeword

*Crack the code to fill in the crossword grid. Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. A number of letters have been decoded to help with the identification of other letters and words in the grid.*

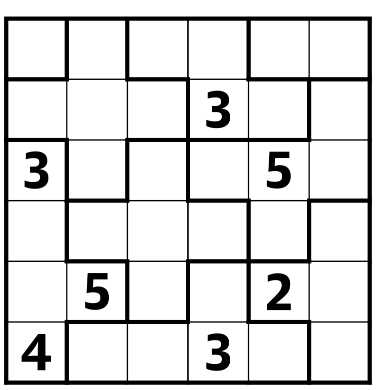


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



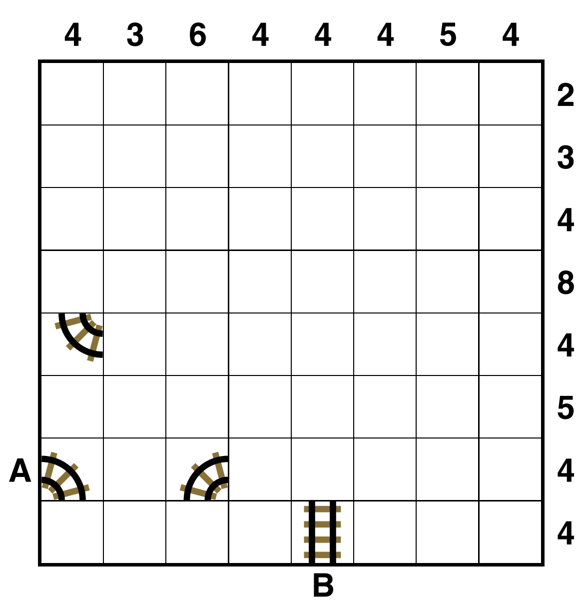
## Suguru

*Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.*



## Train tracks

*Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.*



**Time on your hands?**

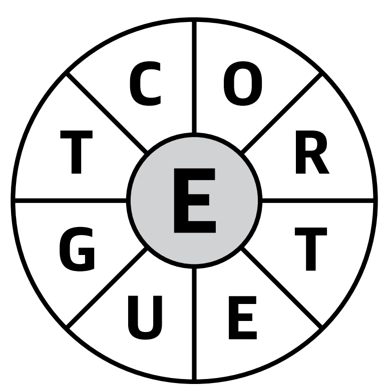
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## Word wheel

*Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. Target: excellent 37, good 31, average 23.*

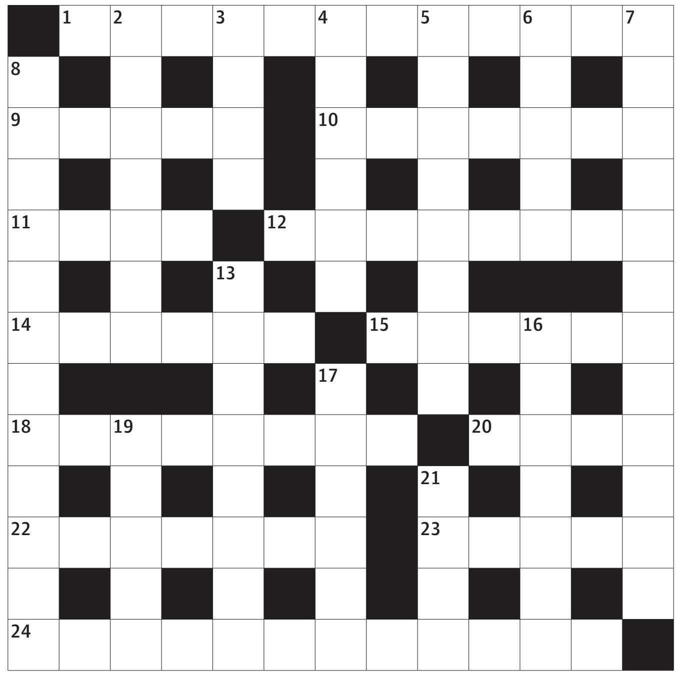


# Puzzles

## Quick crossword no 16,548

**Across**
**1** Very dirty fighting? (3-9)
**9** Ring thrown in a game to land on or near an upright peg (5)
**10** Like a Venetian blind? (7)
**11** Press (4)
**12** First thing? (8)
**14** Gas, O (6)
**15** Struggle (6)
**18** San Francisco prison, once holding a Birdman? (8)
**20** Run away as fast as possible (4)
**22** Type that slopes (7)
**23** Dobson, Ekberg or Roddick (5)
**24** Poem for the young (7,5)

**Down**
**2** Study of alien aviation? (7)
**3** Electrical power unit (4)
**4** London rail terminus (6)
**5** Cheers! (5,3)
**6** Bury (5)
**7** Degenerate rapidly (2,4,3,3)
**8** Use of intentionally vague language (12)
**13** Straddle (the No 1 horse?) (8)
**16** Hercule Poirot's homeland (7)
**17** Boggy (6)
**19** Professorial position? (5)
**21** - (4)




## Yesterday's
Quick crossword

**Solution no 16,547**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | N | A | P | P | Y | ■ | A | V | O | C | E | T |
| T | ■ | M | ■ | F | ■ | D | ■ | I | ■ | A | ■ | A |
| U | K | U | L | E | L | E | ■ | N | Y | L | O | N |
| C | ■ | S | ■ | N | ■ | L | ■ | Y | ■ | Y | ■ | K |
| C | L | E | A | N | ■ | E | C | L | I | P | S | E |
| O | ■ | ■ | ■ | I | ■ | T | ■ | ■ | ■ | S | ■ | R |
| ■ | P | R | O | G | R | E | S | S | I | O | N | ■ |
| S | ■ | E | ■ | ■ | ■ | R | ■ | T | ■ | ■ | ■ | S |
| H | I | B | A | C | H | I | ■ | I | N | G | L | E |
| R | ■ | U | ■ | A | ■ | O | ■ | N | ■ | I | ■ | P |
| O | D | I | U | M | ■ | U | N | K | E | M | P | T |
| U | ■ | L | ■ | E | ■ | S | ■ | E | ■ | M | ■ | E |
| D | O | T | E | L | L | ■ | U | R | G | E | N | T |

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## Sandwich sudoku

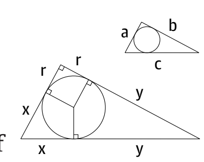
**Medium**

*Place the digits from 1-9 in each row, column and 3x3 block. The clues outside the grid show the sum of the numbers placed between the 1 and 9 in that row or column.*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4 | | | | | 1 | | 8 |
| | 3 | | | | | | 7 | | 26 |
| | | | | | | | | 4 | 21 |
| | | | | | 4 | | | | 0 |
| | | | | | | | | | 20 |
| | | | 2 | | | | | | 20 |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | 5 |
| | 9 | | | | | | 2 | | 0 |
| | 7 | | | | | 1 | | | 8 |
| 0 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 22 | 27 | 29 | 0 | |

## Chris Maslanka
Solutions

**Pyrgic: 1.** According to Pedanticus CC may be pronounced as in *accommodating Rocco*; as in *cappuccino* or *fettuccine*; or as in *accelerated access*. Flaccid belongs to the third category; so it's *flak-sid*, not *flassid*, as the journo said it. **2.** Andy solved it by directed trial and error. Candy pointed out that he had found a solution but he hadn't shown it was the *only* one. He then set about trying out all the possibilities (well, there weren't that many. How many?) Candy meanwhile fell back on simple algebra: 9 × BC = 90B + 9C = BBC = 100B + 10B + C. This boils down to 2C = 5B. But B & C are *digits*. This is more than mere semantics! It makes our solution unique: B = 2, C = 5. **Point to ponder** Are there solutions to A x BC = BBC where A *isn't* 9? **3.** a) (8, 15, 17) — note $8^2 + 15^2 = 17^2$; b) 3; c) The area is 60. In a right-angled triangle, as shown here, the area is always given by xy.




[Notes: radius of the incircle is (a + b - c)/2, or, alternatively and more symmetrically, r = ab/(a + b + c). The rest follows by Pythagoras's theorem.] **4.** 59. [Imagine adding another card. Then there'd be no remainder whether they were dealt out in pairs, threes, fours, fives or sixes. Then you'd have a multiple of 60. It couldn't be 120, as 2 × 54 = 108, which is less than 120; so it's 60. Taking the imaginary added card away, we have 60 - 1 = 59. That's a lot of missing cards.] [**Deepish point to ponder** How likely is it that those 59 cards contain at least one complete pack of cards?] **5.** 11-20 inclusive. [If the numbers are x, (x - 1), (x - 2) ... (x - 9); then reduction by 1 produces the set (x - 1), (x - 2), (x - 3) ... (x - 10). We then require x/(x - 10) = 2. This yields x = 20. The numbers are thus 11-20 inc.] **Readers' Corner** A discussion of last week's #Pyrgic 3 & 5 to follow next week. **Wordplay: Wordpool** c), a), d); **What Knot** BOWLINE (BOWL in E); **EPU** COMPANIES; **Dropouts** SEABIRD; **Word Centre;** TOMBOYISH, (CARBOYED); **Cryptic** WAS; **Missing Links** a) recreational/drug/store, b) banana/split/screen, c) ship/shape/shifter, d) jar/ring/tone, e) water/shed/tears, f) bubble/gum/shield.



# Marina Hyde on tour

The Guardian Live

**In June Marina Hyde will join fellow Guardian writers for three special events to look back on the last few years of political chaos, celebrity madness, royal rumpuses, and toxic tyrants.**

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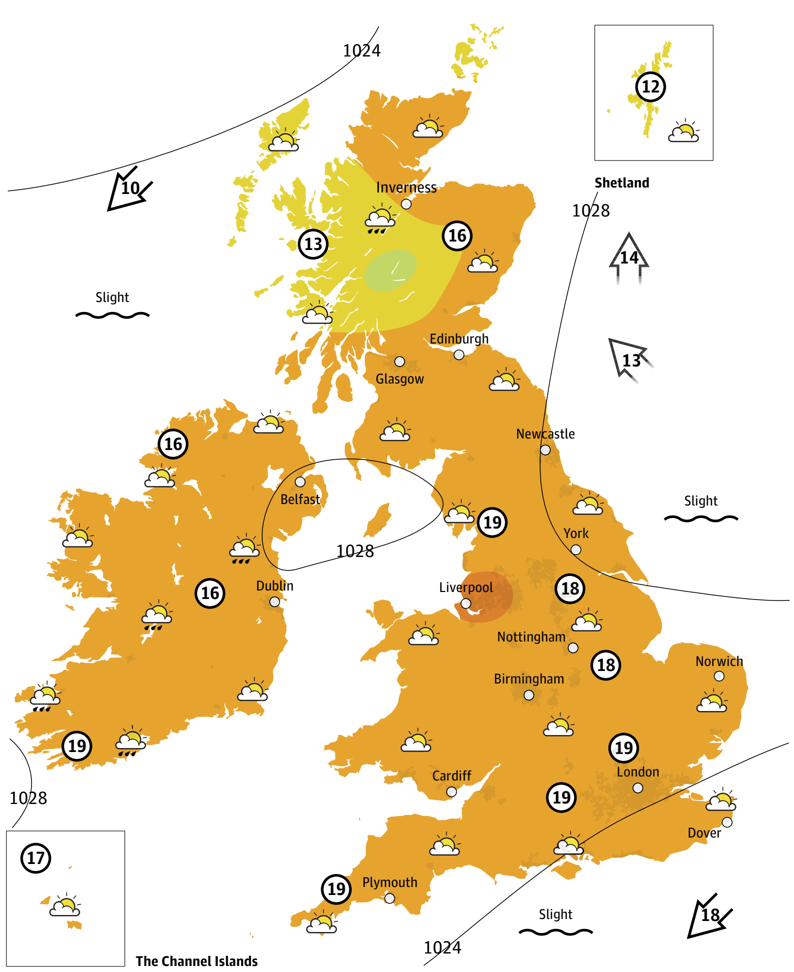
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# Weather
*Saturday 20 May 2023*

## UK and Ireland Noon today

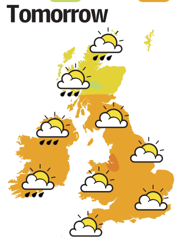
Sunny · Mist · Fog · Sunny intervals · Hazy · Mostly cloudy · Overcast/dull · Sunny showers · Sunny and heavy showers · Light showers · Rain · Sleet · Light snow · Snow showers · Heavy snow · Ice · Thundery rain · Thundery showers · Temperature, ºC · Wind speed, mph · Windy

35C · 30 · 25 · 20 · 15 · 10 · 5 · 0 · -5 · -10 · -15 · -20

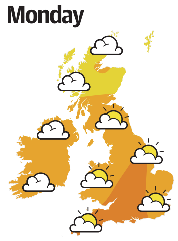



## Forecast

Low 6 High 20
**Tomorrow**



Low 7 High 19
**Monday**



## Carbon count

Daily atmospheric $CO_2$ readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

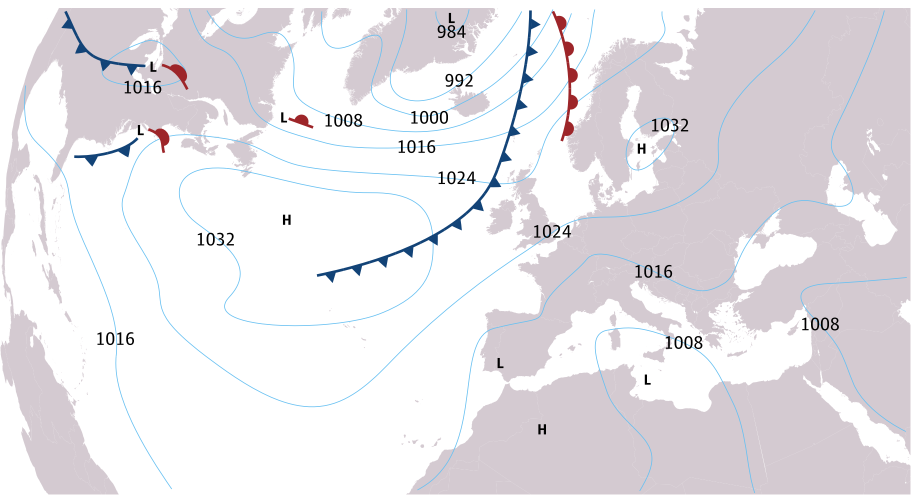
| | |
|---|---|
| *Latest* | |
| **15 May 2023** | 424.27 |
| *Weekly average* | |
| **07 May 2023** | 424.29 |
| **19 May 2022** | 420.75 |
| **19 May 2013** | 399.74 |
| *Pre-industrial base* | *280* |
| *Safe level* | *350* |

Source: NOAA-ESRL

## Around the UK

| | Lows and highs | Precipitation | Air pollution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **London** | 8 – 19 | 5% | Low |
| **Manchester** | 6 – 20 | 0% | Low |
| **Edinburgh** | 9 – 18 | 25% | Low |
| **Belfast** | 11 – 16 | 80% | Low |
| **Birmingham** | 6 – 19 | 0% | Low |
| **Brighton** | 8 – 18 | 5% | Low |
| **Bristol** | 8 – 18 | 5% | Low |
| **Cardiff** | 8 – 19 | 0% | Low |
| **Newcastle** | 7 – 18 | 0% | Low |
| **Penzance** | 11 – 17 | 25% | Low |

## Atlantic front




Cold front

Warm front

Occluded front

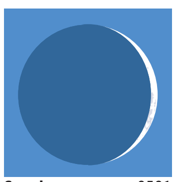
Trough

## High tides

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Aberdeen** | **0224** | 4.1m | **1441** | 4.1m |
| **Avonmouth** | **0828** | 13.0m | **2045** | 13.0m |
| **Barrow** | **0023** | 9.0m | **1244** | 9.2m |
| **Belfast** | **0009** | 3.4m | **1229** | 3.4m |
| **Cobh** | **0639** | 4.0m | **1858** | 4.0m |
| **Cromer** | **0746** | 4.8m | **1958** | 4.9m |
| **Dover** | **0010** | 6.6m | **1230** | 6.5m |
| **Dublin** | **0040** | 3.8m | **1257** | 3.9m |
| **Galway** | **0621** | 5.0m | **1834** | 5.1m |
| **Greenock** | **0127** | 3.3m | **1352** | 3.3m |
| **Harwich** | **0037** | 4.0m | **1305** | 3.9m |
| **Holyhead** | **1134** | 5.5m | **2354** | 5.4m |
| **Hull** | **0729** | 7.2m | **1945** | 7.4m |
| **Leith** | **0340** | 5.4m | **1559** | 5.4m |
| **Liverpool** | **0004** | 9.1m | **1221** | 9.1m |
| **London Bridge** | **0249** | 7.1m | **1515** | 6.9m |
| **Lossiemouth** | **0054** | 3.9m | **1313** | 3.9m |
| **Milford Haven** | **0725** | 6.8m | **1942** | 6.8m |
| **Newquay** | **0615** | 6.7m | **1832** | 6.7m |
| **North Shields** | **0431** | 4.9m | **1647** | 4.9m |
| **Oban** | **0654** | 3.8m | **1902** | 3.8m |
| **Penzance** | **0549** | 5.4m | **1808** | 5.4m |
| **Plymouth** | **0659** | 5.3m | **1915** | 5.4m |
| **Portsmouth** | **0020** | 4.7m | **1241** | 4.5m |
| **Southport** | **--** | -- | **1202** | 8.8m |
| **Stornoway** | **0758** | 4.6m | **2017** | 4.6m |
| **Weymouth** | **0715** | 1.2m | **1930** | 1.3m |
| **Whitby** | **0507** | 5.4m | **1723** | 5.4m |
| **Wick** | **0021** | 3.3m | **1237** | 3.3m |
| **Workington** | **0024** | 8.1m | **1244** | 8.1m |

## Sun & Moon



| | |
|---|---|
| **Sun rises** | 0501 |
| **Sun sets** | 2052 |
| **Moon rises** | 0506 |
| **Moon sets** | 2227 |
| **First Quarter** | 27 May |

AccuWeather.com

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2023

## Lighting up

| | |
|---|---|
| **Belfast** | 2132 to 0510 |
| **Birm'ham** | 2103 to 0503 |
| **Brighton** | 2050 to 0504 |
| **Bristol** | 2103 to 0512 |
| **Carlisle** | 2120 to 0454 |
| **Cork** | 2128 to 0533 |
| **Dublin** | 2126 to 0516 |
| **Glasgow** | 2132 to 0456 |
| **Harlech** | 2115 to 0510 |
| **Inverness** | 2141 to 0444 |
| **London** | 2052 to 0500 |
| **M'chester** | 2110 to 0501 |
| **Newcastle** | 2116 to 0449 |
| **Norwich** | 2052 to 0450 |
| **Penzance** | 2108 to 0528 |

## Weather tracker

At the start of this week an area of low pressure moved off the coast of north Africa, deepening as it travelled northwards across the Mediterranean before situating itself over Italy. Consequently, much of the country received persistent heavy rain from Monday to Wednesday with the largest quantity falling over the north-eastern Emilia-Romagna region.

Within a 36-hour period the region received an average 200mm (8in) of rainfall, although some areas recorded at least 500mm. Given Emilia-Romagna receives an average of 1,000mm a year, 50% of the annual mean rainfall falling in a short timeframe in a localised area has led to substantial flooding as rivers burst their banks.

The flooding has been exacerbated by previous months of drought conditions, drying out soils and reducing their capacity to store water. Extensive flooding submerged thousands of acres of farmland, towns and villages, resulting in widespread evacuations and an estimated €20m (£17.4m) worth of damage. The Formula One grand prix at Imola, scheduled for this weekend, has been cancelled and at least 13 people have died as a result of the flooding. **James Parrish** *MetDesk*

## Around the world

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Algiers | 20 | Lisbon | 24 |
| Ams'dam | 19 | Madrid | 20 |
| Athens | 25 | Malaga | 22 |
| Auckland | 17 | Melb'rne | 14 |
| B Aires | 16 | Mexico C | 26 |
| Bangkok | 39 | Miami | 31 |
| Barcelona | 20 | Milan | 18 |
| Basra | 37 | Mombasa | 31 |
| Beijing | 26 | Moscow | 15 |
| Berlin | 21 | Mumbai | 33 |
| Bermuda | 24 | N Orleans | 32 |
| Brussels | 18 | Nairobi | 27 |
| Budapest | 26 | New Delhi | 41 |
| C'hagen | 16 | New York | 20 |
| Cairo | 29 | Oslo | 22 |
| Cape Town | 17 | Paris | 20 |
| Chicago | 20 | Perth | 22 |
| Corfu | 24 | Prague | 22 |
| Dakar | 27 | Reykjavik | 7 |
| Dhaka | 33 | Rio de J | 24 |
| Dublin | 16 | Rome | 20 |
| Florence | 19 | Shanghai | 28 |
| Gibraltar | 23 | Singapore | 31 |
| H Kong | 31 | Stockh'm | 19 |
| Harare | 27 | Strasb'g | 21 |
| Helsinki | 21 | Sydney | 19 |
| Istanbul | 20 | Tel Aviv | 23 |
| Jo'burg | 17 | Tenerife | 25 |
| K Lumpur | 33 | Tokyo | 23 |
| K'mandu | 27 | Toronto | 16 |
| Kabul | 27 | Vancouv'r | 20 |
| Kingston | 32 | Vienna | 23 |
| Kolkata | 36 | Warsaw | 22 |
| L Angeles | 24 | Wash'ton | 25 |
| Lagos | 30 | Well'ton | 15 |
| Lima | 23 | Zurich | 20 |


Left: Elineti and Lucy from Malawi; Right: Gilya and her daughter Maya, sharing a joke in the UK.

# UNITED BY HOPE

No matter where we are in the world, we all love a good laugh together. It's these little things that make us human. And although injustice divides us, hope unites us with the promise of a better world.

**Fund hope**
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**Yotam Ottolenghi**
Mapo tofu lettuce

**Tamal Ray**
Japanese pancakes

**Nancy Birtwhistle**
£1 sausage traybake

**Stosie Madi**
Semolina cake

**Catch of the day**
Miso mackerel
with citrus mayo

**Felicity Cloake**
Perfect Turkish
breakfast eggs

**Rachel Roddy**
Oat and raisin
biscuits

**Kitchen aide**
Cooking with
chocolate

**Grace Dent**
'Umami-drenched
deliciousness'



**Custard dream**
Ravneet Gill's strawberry tart

# Feast

**Issue No.278** Saturday 20 May 2023

The Guardian



# Yotam Ottolenghi



**Baby gem lettuces *are* little gems, don't you think?** They're so versatile, for starters, being soft enough to be eaten raw, yet also robust enough to be cut into quarters and grilled. The leaves are sweet enough to stand alone, but are also happy to take a back seat and showcase other flavours. Half of my test kitchen team seem to use the leaves to carry their lunch break food in, as though it's a sandwich, but we'll save that (and possibly a recipe or two) for another day.



PHOTOGRAPHS: LOUISE HAGGER/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: EMILY KYDD. PROP STYLING: JENNIFER KAY. FOOD ASSISTANT: SUSANNA UNSWORTH

## Green salad with grated carrot and pistachio

V GF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **20 min** |
| Marinate | **30 min+** |
| Cook | **25 min** |
| Serves | **4** |
| Cost | **About £1 a head** |

**4 carrots**, trimmed, peeled and grated (180g), plus 10g green tops, washed and finely chopped (or 10g extra parsley)
**1 tsp dijon mustard**
**20g sultanas**
**5 tsp white-wine vinegar**
**60ml olive oil**
**Fine sea salt and black pepper**
**1 small garlic clove,** peeled and crushed
**100g plain yoghurt**
**½ tsp caster sugar**
**10g mint leaves,** finely chopped
**10g parsley leaves,** finely chopped (or 20g if your carrots didn't come with green tops)
**1 baby gem lettuce,** leaves separated and halved lengthways (100g)
**1 white chicory**, root trimmed, leaves separated and halved lengthways (100g)
**1 butterhead lettuce**, leaves separated, larger leaves cut in half lengthways (200g)
**30g pistachio kernels**, toasted and lightly crushed in a mortar

**This is a spin on the humble, ubiquitous and *very* French grated carottes râpées salad. You can even make the carrot component in full the night before eating, if you like: it only gets better with time. If you can't get hold of carrots with leafy green tops, don't worry: just use extra chopped parsley instead.**

In a small bowl, mix the grated carrots with the mustard, sultanas, four teaspoons of the vinegar, a tablespoon of oil and a half-teaspoon of salt, then set aside to marinate for at least half an hour.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, make the dressing by mixing the remaining teaspoon of vinegar and three tablespoons of oil with the garlic, yoghurt, sugar, a quarter-teaspoon of salt and a good grind of black pepper.

In a small bowl, combine the herbs with the carrot tops (or extra chopped parsley).

Put the salad leaves and half the herbs in the dressing bowl, then toss gently to coat. Arrange the leaves on a shallow platter and scatter the grated carrot on top. Serve with the remaining herbs and the pistachios sprinkled on top. →

V Vegetarian VG Vegan GF Gluten free DF Dairy free

# Grilled lettuce with orange, almond and feta

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | 15 min |
| Cook | 20 min |
| Serves | 4 as a side |
| Cost | About £1.30 a head |

**1 banana shallot** (40g), peeled and cut into thin rounds
**1 lemon**, zest finely grated, to get 1 tsp, and juiced, to get 2 tbsp
**Fine sea salt and black pepper**
**100g orzo**
**60g pitted kalamata olives**
**4 baby gem lettuce**, cut lengthways into quarters
**50g feta**, crumbled

**For the orange and almond dressing**
**80ml olive oil**
**1 tsp runny honey**
**½ tsp nigella seeds**
**¼ tsp aleppo chilli flakes**
**1 large orange**
**50g skin-on almonds**, toasted and roughly chopped

**A bit of heat transforms crunchy lettuce leaves into a smoky, flavour-bomb. I use orzo in the base of this salad to soak up the dressing, but feel free to swap it with giant couscous or a similar small-shaped pasta. The dressing also works beautifully on raw salad leaves or spooned over roast chicken.**

Put the shallot, lemon juice, an eighth of a teaspoon of salt and a good grind of black pepper in a medium bowl and mix well.

In a dry, medium saucepan on a medium-high heat, toast the orzo, stirring frequently, for seven minutes, until golden, then pour in just-boiled salted water to cover and leave to cook for seven to nine minutes, until softened but still with a bite. Drain well, then stir the pasta into the shallot bowl.

Meanwhile, put a griddle plan on a high heat and ventilate the kitchen. Once the pan is hot, grill the olives for seven minutes, until lightly charred all over, then tip on to a board, slice thinly and stir into the orzo bowl.

Working in two batches, grill the lettuce quarters, turning them as necessary, for six minutes, until nicely charred on all sides, then transfer to a large plate or tray.

Whisk the first four dressing ingredients in a small bowl with a quarter-teaspoon of salt. Using a small, serrated knife, top and tail the orange, then cut away and discard the skin and white pith. Cut the orange into ½cm-thick rounds, then tear these into half-moons and gently toss in the dressing with the almonds.

Scatter the still-warm orzo mix over a large platter, arrange the grilled lettuce quarters on top and sprinkle over the feta. Spoon over the orange dressing and serve.





# Mapo tofu gem with pickled cucumber

V VG DF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **20 min** |
| Cook | **25 min** |
| Serves | **4** |
| Cost | **About £2.10 a head** |

**30g dried shiitake mushrooms**
**75ml sunflower oil**, plus 1 tsp extra
**150g fresh shiitake mushrooms**, caps and stalks separated, caps cut into ½cm-thick slices
**Fine sea salt**
**160g extra-firm tofu**, roughly broken
**1½ tsp Sichuan peppercorns**, roughly ground in a mortar
**1 tbsp soy sauce**
**20g ginger**, peeled and roughly chopped
**4 garlic cloves**, peeled and roughly chopped
**40g harissa**
**1 tbsp dark soy sauce**
**1½ tsp brown sugar**
**1½ tsp cornflour**
**2 baby gem lettuce**, leaves trimmed and cut lengthways into quarters
**1 tsp white sesame seeds**, toasted
**1 tsp black sesame seeds**, toasted

**For the pickled cucumber**
**2 tbsp rice-wine vinegar**
**¼ tsp brown sugar**
**½ tsp sesame oil**
**1 small Persian or baby cucumber** (80g), trimmed and cut into 3-4mm-thick slices
**2-3 spring onions**, trimmed and cut at an angle into 1½cm-wide pieces

**Gem lettuce is a wonderful carrier for this mapo tofu-inspired sauce, which works equally well with Chinese or other cabbages, or stirred into noodles, or with steamed fish, or simply served on its own with some steamed rice alongside.**

Put the dried shiitake mushrooms in a medium bowl, cover with 350ml just-boiled water, then weigh them down with a small plate and leave to rehydrate for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, put a tablespoon of oil in a large saute pan on a medium high heat, then add the sliced fresh shiitake caps and an eighth of a teaspoon of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, for five minutes, until golden. Tip the fried mushrooms into a bowl and set aside.

Next, make the pickled cucumber. Put the vinegar, sugar and sesame oil in a small bowl with a quarter-teaspoon of fine sea salt, mix to combine, then stir in the cucumber and spring onions, and set aside.

To make the mapo base, strain the soaked shiitake mushrooms to remove any sandy bits, and reserve the soaking liquid. Put the soaked mushrooms in the small bowl of a food processor with the tofu and the fresh shiitake stalks, and pulse a few times to break them up into a coarse mince.

Return the saute pan to a medium-high heat, add the remaining 60ml oil and, once it's good and hot, stir in the minced mushroom and tofu mixture. Cook, stirring occasionally, for five minutes, until crisp and golden in places. Stir in the Sichuan pepper and a tablespoon of soy sauce, cook for a minute, then take off the heat.

Put the ginger, garlic, harissa, dark soy sauce and sugar in the small bowl of a food processor, add half the reserved mushroom soaking liquid and blitz for two or three minutes, until you have an almost smooth paste.

Return the minced mushroom and tofu pan to a medium-high heat, add the spice paste and cook, stirring, for two minutes. Mix the cornflour and the remaining mushroom soaking liquid, then pour into the pan and add the reserved fried shiitake caps. Cook for another two or three minutes, until the sauce thickens slightly, then take off the heat.

Drizzle the lettuce quarters with the remaining teaspoon of oil, sprinkle with an eighth of a teaspoon of salt, then, using tongs, gently fold the lettuce into the mapo sauce so it's coated all over and some sauce gets in between the layers of leaves.

Arrange the lettuce quarters and sauce on a platter, spoon on the cucumber and spring onion pickle, and dress with any remaining pickling liquid. Serve at once with the toasted sesame seeds scattered on top.





# Tamal Ray
## Midweek meal



**Okonomiyaki is a savoury Japanese pancake** that has been a crucial addition to my arsenal of easy midweek meals when time and energy are in short supply. A faithful okonomiyaki recipe would have a few ingredients you'd find only in a specialist Japanese food store, but I've tried to stick to ones you'll either already have in the cupboard or will be able to find in a large supermarket. Feel free to customise the filling, and especially the sauces, as you wish – I'd choose something rich, something sweet and something spicy.

# Okonomiyaki

DF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **5 min** |
| Cook | **20 min** |
| Rest | **20 min** |
| Serves | **1** |
| Cost | **About £3.50** |

**For the batter**
**30g plain flour**
**20g cornflour**
**1 large egg**, beaten
**1 tbsp dark soy sauce**
**1 tsp Marmite**
**½ tsp brown sugar**

**For the filling**
**100g cabbage**, shredded
**3 spring onions** (about 50g)
**Vegetable oil**, for frying
**100g raw salmon**, boned and skinned

**To finish**
**Mayonnaise**
**Hoisin sauce**
**Sriracha**

To make the batter, sieve the flours into a bowl, then add the egg, soy sauce, Marmite and sugar, and whisk until you have a smooth batter. Set aside and leave to stand for 20 minutes.

Stir the cabbage and onions into the batter until evenly coated. Warm a teaspoon of oil in a small (15cm) saucepan on a low-medium heat. Slice the salmon into small chunks and arrange them in the pan, then top with the cabbage batter. Push it down gently, cover the pan and cook for seven minutes.

Flip the pancake on to a plate, then slide it back into the pan uncooked side down, pop the lid back on and cook for another six minutes, until golden brown. Finish with a generous helping of all three sauces dribbled over the top, and enjoy.

*The Guardian aims to publish recipes for fish rated as sustainable by the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide.*



PHOTOGRAPH: OLA O SMIT/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: ELLIE MULLIGAN.
PROP STYLING: LOUIE WALLER. FOOD ASSISTANT: EMMY FYLES. INSET: GETTY IMAGES

# Nancy Birtwhistle
# The £1 store cupboard



**When I spot a few apples in the fruit bowl looking wrinkled, dry and past their best,** I have these recipes to hand to ensure they don't end their days in the compost bin. Pork and apple are great together, and today's traybake is minimal effort yet has maximum flavour – you can put in whatever vegetables that need using up. And if the oven's going to be on anyway, maximise that energy and pop in this mock eve's pudding at the same time.

## Mock eve's pudding

V

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | 10 min |
| Cook | 1 hr |
| Serves | 4-6 |
| Cost | About 70p a head |

**125g butter, margarine or spread**
**125g sugar**
**2 eggs**
**1 tsp almond extract**
**100g finely blitzed breadcrumbs**
**3-4 large apples**
**1 tbsp flaked almonds** (optional)
**Custard**, to serve

**A great family pudding that makes the very best use of leftovers. Traditionally made using apples and topped with a sponge made from ground almonds, my "penny-wise" version uses stale bread in the sponge and wrinkled apples from the fruit bowl.**

In a large bowl, beat the butter, sugar, eggs, almond extract and breadcrumbs with a handheld electric whisk until well combined. Set aside.

Peel, core and slice the apples into the base of a gratin dish (I used a 23cm x 15cm x 5cm one), and add a sprinkle of sugar, if need be – if the apples are past their best, they should be sweet enough already.

Spoon the batter on top, then smooth it out with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle over the flaked almonds, if using, then bake at 190C (170C fan)/gas 5 for 50 minutes. Serve hot with lashings of custard.







PHOTOGRAPHS: YUKI SUGIURA/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: HANNA MILLER. PROP STYLING: ANNA WILKINS. FOOD ASSISTANT: ISOBEL CLARKE

# Oven-to-table sausage traybake

DF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **10 min** |
| Cook | **1 hr** |
| Serves | **4** |
| Cost | **About £1 a head** |

**1-2 tbsp oil**
**4 garlic cloves**, unpeeled
**8 sausages**
**2 onions**
**2 celery sticks**
**2 carrots**
**12 small new potatoes**
**2 apples** (wrinkled ones are perfect for this)
**2 tbsp brown sugar**
**2 tbsp soy sauce**
**1 tbsp mixed dried herbs**, or 2 tbsp finely chopped fresh herbs (eg parsley, sage, thyme)
**1 tsp dried rosemary**, or 1 sprig fresh rosemary, picked and chopped
**2 heaped tsp cornflour**
**250ml apple juice**
**250ml water**
**1 tbsp apple cider or malt vinegar**
**1 cup frozen peas**
**1 good sprinkle fresh or frozen parsley**, to garnish (optional)

**Use pork, vegetarian, gluten-free or vegan sausages for this tasty, no-faff dinner. You will need a large roasting dish or tin.**

Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/gas 6. Put the oil, garlic and sausages into a large roasting dish, then roast for 15-20 minutes, until the sausages start to turn golden on all sides.

Meanwhile, prepare the vegetables, and pop them into a large bowl as you do so: quarter the onions and remove their outer skin; cut the celery into 2½cm lengths; peel the carrots and cut into 5mm slices; cut the potatoes in half (there's no need to peel). Peel and quarter the apples, then core them and cut in half widthways. When all of the vegetables are in the bowl, add the sugar, soy sauce and herbs, and give everything a good mix.

Remove the dish from the oven, squash the garlic with the back of a fork to release the pulp, then lift out and discard the skins. Stir in the vegetables, then return the dish to the oven for 30-40 minutes, until the veg are tinged brown at the edges and just tender.

Meanwhile, spoon the cornflour into a measuring jug, then whisk in the apple juice and water a little at a time, so there are no lumps, then stir in the vinegar.

Remove the tin from the oven, sprinkle over the frozen peas, then pour over the apple juice mix and pop it back into the oven for 10-15 minutes, so the peas heat through and the sauce bubbles up and thickens. Remove from the oven, sprinkle over the parsley (if using) and serve on warm plates.

*Nancy Birtwhistle is the author of The Green Gardening Handbook: Grow, Eat and Enjoy, published by One Boat at £14.99. To order a copy for £13.19, go to theguardianbookshop.com*



# Stosie Madi
# The new vegan



***Namoura*, which is also known as *basbousa*, is a Moorish semolina cake found in many Arab and Middle Eastern countries.** It has a coarse, sandy, crumbly texture, and is held together by a fragrant, floral, sticky syrup. It's a favourite sweet teatime and festive treat that's baked at home or bought by the kilo in pastry shops; it's also enjoyed during *iftar* in the months of Ramadan. The garden at my pub, the Parkers Arms, is flanked by elderflower trees, and our annual harvest makes the best fragrant cordial for this glaze. The heady scent of the blossom is hard to miss, and although shop-bought versions are a great substitute, homemade is hard to beat, so if you enjoy foraging, do have a go at making your own.



PHOTOGRAPH: LOUISE HAGGER/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: EMILY KYDD. PROP STYLING: JENNIFER KAY. FOOD ASSISTANT: SUSANNA UNSWORTH. INSET: ALAMY

## Namoura (Moorish semolina cake)

V VG DF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **10 min** |
| Chill | **3 hr+** |
| Cook | **1 hr** |
| Makes | **10-12 squares** |
| Cost | **About 40p a head** |

**For the glaze**
**175ml elderflower cordial** (homemade or shop-bought)
**The zest and juice of 2 large lemons**

**For the cake**
**2 tbsp tahini paste**
**250g coarse semolina**
**50g ground almonds**
**125g caster sugar**
**2 tsp baking powder**
**1 tsp salt**
**75ml rapeseed oil**
**75ml coconut cream** – Biona makes a good one
**25ml vegan milk** – I use Alpro's no-sugar almond milk
**Blanched peeled raw whole almonds**, to garnish

**This works as well with a mint tea for an afternoon pick-me-up as it does with yoghurt or ice-cream for pudding.**

Put the cordial in a small pan, put it on a medium heat just to warm through, then take off the heat, stir in the lemon juice and leave to cool. Meanwhile, grease a shallow (2½cm-deep) 20cm x 30cm cake tin with the tahini paste.

Put the semolina, ground almonds, sugar, baking powder, salt and lemon zest in a large bowl and mix to combine. Stir in the oil, cream and milk until everything is well incorporated, then pour into the prepared tin and use a spatula to spread out the batter evenly.

With a small sharp knife (a non-serrated one is best here), score the top of the batter into 4cm squares, then pop a whole almond in the centre of each one. Put in the fridge for at least three hours, and ideally overnight.

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/gas 4, then bake the cake for 30-40 minutes, until the top is nicely golden brown. Remove from the oven, pour over the cooled elderflower lemon syrup, so it covers the whole top of the cake, then leave it to soak in and the cake to cool completely. Cut into squares and serve with yoghurt or ice-cream; it will keep in a cake tin for up to a week.

*Meera Sodha is away. Stosie Madi is chef/co-owner of The Parkers Arms in Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire*





PHOTOGRAPH: LIZZIE MAYSON/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: TAMARA VOS. PROP STYLING: LOUIE WALLER. FOOD ASSISTANT: CHARLOTTE WHATCOTT

# Duncan Ray
# Marvellous mackerel



Mackerel's meaty texture and crisp skin make for sublime eating, plus it works so well with bold flavours; it's also cheap, as well as rich in vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids. As with all seafood, and especially in light of the recent MCS finding that some UK mackerel fisheries are no longer viable, make sure yours comes from a sustainable source.

## Miso mackerel with citrus mayo

GF DF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **10 min** |
| Cook | **15-20 min** |
| Serves | **6** |
| Cost | **About £2.90 a head** |

**6 mackerel fillets**
**1 handful fresh coriander**
**1 punnet mustard cress**

### For the miso glaze
**300ml white wine**
**60ml ketjap manis**
**200ml mirin**
**200g white miso paste**
**150g golden caster sugar**
**30g grated ginger**
**2 garlic cloves**, peeled and grated

### For the mayonnaise
**Juice of 1 orange, 1 lime and 1 lemon**
**1 large egg, plus 1 yolk**
**1 tbsp dijon mustard**
**250ml rapeseed oil**
**Salt**

Put all the ingredients for the glaze in a pan on a medium-high heat, cook for five minutes, or until reduced enough to coat the back of a spoon, then take off the heat.

Now for the mayo. Put the citrus juices in a pan and boil, stirring, for three to five minutes, until syrupy. Measure out 20ml of the reduction (save the rest to brush over a roast chicken (or for fruit squash), and leave to cool.

Put the egg, egg yolk and mustard in a blender, then very slowly trickle in the oil and blitz to emulsify. Add the reserved 20ml citrus reduction and season with salt to taste.

Brush the glaze on the skin of each mackerel fillet, then cook skin side up under a very hot grill for two minutes, until the skin is charred and the flesh cooked through.

Decorate six plates with some of the mayo, top each with a fish fillet, garnish with coriander and cress, and serve.

## Mackerel rillettes

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **10 min** |
| Cook | **15 min** |
| Serves | **6** |
| Cost | **About £2.60 a head** |

**600g smoked mackerel fillets**
**Juice of 2 lemons**
**200g creme fraiche**
**200g cream cheese**
**30g creamed horseradish**
**6 thick slices sourdough**

### For the cucumber pickle
**100ml rice-wine vinegar**
**75g caster sugar**
**½ tbsp salt**
**1 cucumber**, quartered lengthways, deseeded and cut into 5mm slices
**½ red onion**, thinly sliced
**1 red chilli**, thinly sliced
**1 tbsp shredded ginger**
**1 tbsp coriander leaves**

Put the mackerel and lemon juice in a food processor, blend smooth, then fold in the creme fraiche, cream cheese and horseradish, and chill.

Put the vinegar, 50ml water, sugar and salt in a small pan, cook gently, swirling so the solids dissolve, then cool.

Mix the cucumber, onion, chilli, ginger and coriander, then pour on the cold pickle liquor and marinate for five minutes.

Toast the bread and put it on a platter. Spoon some rillettes alongside, followed by a mound of the pickle, and serve.

## Mackerel with curried mussels

GF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **15 min** |
| Cook | **45 min** |
| Serves | **6** |
| Cost | **About £4 a head** |

**2kg live mussels**, cleaned
**6 mackerel fillets**
**Salt and pepper**

### For the sauce
**60ml olive oil**
**120g unsalted butter**
**4 shallots**, peeled and very finely diced
**1 celery stalk**, trimmed and very finely diced
**1 leek**, trimmed and very finely diced
**1 sprig fresh thyme**
**1 bay leaf**
**30g curry paste**
**1 pinch cayenne pepper**
**1 big pinch saffron strands** – use only as much as you can afford
**15g white peppercorns**, crushed in a mortar
**120ml Noilly Prat**
**375ml white wine**
**3 garlic cloves**, peeled and crushed
**90ml good fish stock**
**120ml double cream**
**30ml lemon juice**

### For the carrots
**25g unsalted butter**
**20 chantenay carrots**
**2 pinches sea salt**
**50g caster sugar**
**1 tsp cumin seeds**
**100ml white wine**

Melt the oil and half the butter in a pan on a gentle heat, add the shallots and sweat for three to five minutes, just to soften. Add the celery, leek, thyme and bay, and cook, stirring, for two minutes more. Add the curry paste and cayenne, and cook gently, stirring, for five minutes more. Add the saffron, crushed peppercorns and Noilly Prat, then turn up the heat and cook, stirring, until reduced to a syrup. Add the wine, bring to a boil, reduce by half, then add the garlic and stock, and bring to a slow boil.

Now for the carrots. Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/gas 6. Melt the butter in an ovenproof pan, then stir in the carrots, salt, sugar, cumin and wine, and roast for 10-15 minutes, until the carrots are done but still have a crunch.

Wash the mussels in cold water (discard any with open or cracked shells), then stir into the sauce, turn the heat to high, cover and cook for eight minutes, until they all open (bin any that don't). Lift out the mussels, pick them from their shells and divide among six shallow bowls.

Cook the fish skin side up under a very hot grill for a couple of minutes, until the skin is charred and the flesh cooked.

Strain the sauce into another pan, bring to a boil, then add the cream and reduce until it coats the back of a spoon. Stir in the lemon juice, whisk in the rest of the butter a cube at a time, then season to taste.

Ladle the sauce over the mussels, lay a fish fillet on top of each portion, and serve with the carrots alongside.

*Duncan Ray is chef/owner of The Little Fish Market in Hove, East Sussex*




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# Fiona Beckett

## It's all Greek to me: the wine that's finally come of age

Greece has been producing wine for longer even than Italy, though you'd hardly think so, considering its continued absence from most of our supermarket shelves. Mind you, that could soon be about to change due in no small part to the growing popularity of what has become the country's signature white grape, assyrtiko. It first took off on the island of Santorini, but is now being planted all over Greece, from the central Atalanti Valley to Macedonia. Happily, it's a brilliant pairing with all things Greek, including the ubiquitous feta salad, and goes well with seafood from anywhere.

That's the good news. The bad news is that assyrtiko has got progressively more expensive in recent years, especially examples from Santorini itself, where growing conditions are hugely challenging, from the volcanic soil to the lack of rain: Santorini gets a fraction of the mainland's rainfall and instead relies on the moisture from the heavy mist that falls nightly over the island. It's also subject to violent winds, which accounts for the unique way the vines are trained, coiled around like a woven basket. While the stems are cut back from time to time, the root systems can date back hundreds of years: "When we say old vines here, we don't mean 40 years old," explains Yiannis Paraskevopoulous of Gaia Wines, "we mean 400."

The island's vines are also widely spaced out due to a lack of nutrients in the soil, which contributes to exceptionally low yields and to the level of intensity that makes its wines so unique. As if that were not enough, the land available has been progressively swallowed up for development, to satisfy the demands of a booming tourist industry. No wonder grape prices now fetch €5 a kilo, compared with 85 cents in 2010.

Most Santorini assyrtikos are unoaked, which generally best expresses their character, but some, such as Gaia's Wild Ferment in today's pick, have a proportion that is aged in oak and clay spheres. The grape is also used to make a relatively low-alcohol but intensely sweet dessert wine called vinsanto.

All of which raises a question: shouldn't you just buy cheaper versions from elsewhere in Greece, then? Well, they're good, but they aren't *as* good as Santorini assyrtiko. The best parallel I can think of, from both a quality and price point of view, is chablis – yes, it's chardonnay, but it's not like chardonnay from anywhere else. Just like chablis, the best assyrtikos are very serious wines indeed, and have a real capacity to age. If you can hang on to them for that long, that is.

### Four assyrtikos that are well worth a try



**Aldi Athlon Assyrtiko 2022** £7.99, 12%. Fresh, zesty, lemony and affordable: a good first-timer's assyrtiko



**Kir-Yianni Assyrtiko 2021** £15.99, Laithwaites, Averys, 13.5%. A richer, more rounded, tropical-fruited style



**The Society's Exhibition Santorini Assyrtiko 2021** £17.50 The Wine Society, 13%. Pure, saline, thrilling. Drink with any seafood



**Gaia Wild Ferment Assyrtiko 2022** £36.28 Great Wines Direct, 13.5%. Sexy, creamy and slightly smoky. Worth the splurge



PHOTOGRAPH: ROB LAWSON/THE GUARDIAN. DRINK STYLING: SEB DAVIS

### The good mixer

## Orange vermouth spritz

**This super-fresh spritz is a great aperitif and ideal for when you're entertaining friends, because most of the work is done well in advance. For a lower-alcohol option, ditch the fizz for soda water or ginger ale.**

Serves **1**

**For the orange-infused vermouth (makes 30 servings)**
**40g orange peel strips**, from about 3-4 oranges
**40g white sugar**
**40g vodka**
**250g dry vermouth**
**40g fresh orange juice** (ie, from the peeled oranges above)

**For the spritz**
**25ml orange vermouth** – see above and method
**100ml sparkling wine** – a dry one, ideally
**1 wide strip orange peel**, to garnish

Working in batches, stack up four or five pieces of orange peel at a time, and cut them into fine strips, to ensure maximum oil extraction and infusion. Combine the peel and sugar in a bowl, then cover and leave at room temperature until the sugar dissolves – stir from time to time. Once it's dissolved, stir in the vodka and steep for 12 hours.

Pour in the vermouth and orange juice, leave for another 12 hours, then fine strain and decant into a clean bottle. The vermouth will keep in the fridge for up to two months.

To make the drink, pour the vermouth and sparkling wine into a rocks glass filled with ice. Cut out a 50p coin-sized disc of orange peel, pinch it over the drink, to express the oils, then drop it in and serve.
*Mr Lyan Studio for Padella, London*



# Ravneet Gill
# The sweet spot



**The combination of smooth custard and juicy, bright strawberries is a match made in heaven.** With just the right balance of sweetness and creaminess, this tart is such a crowd-pleaser, and sure to become a dinner party favourite. Learn some classic baking skills and really show off with this slice of summer.

PHOTOGRAPH (INCLUDING COVER): OLA O SMIT/THE GUARDIAN. FOOD STYLING: BENJAMINA EBUEHI. PROP STYLING: ANNA WILKINS. FOOD ASSISTANT: ALICE HUGHES. INSET: GETTYIMAGES



## Strawberry and custard tart

V

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **30 min** |
| Chill | **30 min** |
| Cook | **1 hr 30 min** |
| Makes | **1 x 23cm tart** |
| Cost | **About £1.20 a head** |

**230g strawberries,** hulled and quartered
**100g apricot jam**
**½ lemon,** juiced

**For the pastry**
**110g cold unsalted butter,** diced
**175g plain flour,** plus extra for dusting
**50g icing sugar**
**A pinch of salt**
**3 medium egg yolks,** beaten
**100g strawberry jam**

**For the creme patissiere**
**500ml full-fat milk**
**130g golden caster sugar**
**¼ tsp vanilla bean paste**
**35g cornflour**
**125g egg yolks** (from about 6 eggs)
**300ml double cream,** whipped to soft peaks

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/gas 4. For the pastry, put the butter, flour, icing sugar and salt in a medium bowl and mix with your hands until it's the consistency of breadcrumbs. Add two of the egg yolks and knead to a smooth dough (do not overwork). Wrap in clingfilm and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured surface to 5mm thick, then use it to line a 23cm tart tin, leaving a little overhang. Add baking beans and blind bake for 30-35 minutes, until the edges are golden. Remove the beans and cook for a further five to 10 minutes, until golden. Brush the pastry with egg wash, and bake for two minutes more. Mix 20ml water with the strawberry jam, and brush over the entire pastry case. Carefully trim the excess pastry.

For the creme patissiere, heat the milk with half the sugar and the vanilla in a medium saucepan, and bring to steaming point (just before it boils). In a large bowl, whisk the remaining sugar, cornflour and egg yolks. Gradually whisk the milk mix into the egg mix until well combined, then pour the custard back into the pan and cook on a medium heat, whisking constantly, for a few minutes, until bubbling and thick.

Blitz the creme patissiere in a blender to remove any lumps, then pour into a tray, lay some clingfilm on the surface to stop it forming a skin, and leave to cool. Once cool, pour into a large bowl, beat with a wooden spoon to loosen, then gently fold in the whipped cream.

Spoon the creme patissiere into the pastry case and smooth out the top. Carefully remove the tart from its tin, and arrange the strawberries on top. Finally, mix the apricot jam and lemon juice in a small bowl, and use to glaze the fruit.

# Felicity Cloake
# The perfect ... Menemen



**This Turkish breakfast favourite has much in common with north African shakshuka,** except, instead of being left whole, the eggs are folded into a richly tomatoey sauce. As chef Somer Sivrioglu explains, however, 'no one can agree on the perfect version – it varies from village to village and from house to house.' With that in mind, take today's recipe as my contribution to the debate.

### The vegetable base

Peppers and tomatoes are the soul of this dish, and those peppers are generally green ones, though Yasmin Khan uses red in her book Ripe Figs. You want something with a bit of heat - slender, mid-green Turkish *sivri biber*, if you can find them, though padrón, shishito or similar will work as well. If you can find only bell peppers, add a mild chilli, too, as Ghillie Basan suggests in Classic Turkish Cooking.

Özlem Warren, author of Özlem's Turkish Table, tells me that "juicy, ripe tomatoes work best; if tomatoes [are] on the less ripe side, some folk may also add a bit of tomato paste to give it depth". You need a fair amount of liquid to cook the eggs in, which is why tinned tomatoes are less than ideal here, but if that's all you have, they're better than nothing.

You can use yellow, red or even Warren's spring onions, depending on your preference; I rather like the bite of the spring variety at breakfast time.

### The seasoning

Turkish red pepper flakes, also known as *pul biber* or aleppo pepper, are the best option here - they're described by Sue Quinn as "gently fruity, slightly salty red chilli flakes with a soft kiss of heat" - but paprika or chilli flakes can stand in if necessary. I am also taken by Khan and J Kenji López-Alt's pinch of oregano.



**1** Grate the halved tomatoes into a bowl, discarding the skins as you go and leaving just the pulp and juices behind



**2** Halve and core the green peppers, then cut into strips. Chop the spring onions into chunky slices



**3** Fry the peppers for five minutes, to soften, then add the butter, spring onions, pul biber and oregano, if using



**4** Stir in the tomato pulp, add a pinch of sugar, if need be, then simmer until the mix thickens and darkens a little

## The eggs

Though you can crack the eggs into the sauce shakshuka-style, it's more common to stir them in or, my own preference, scramble them into it, as Warren and YouTuber Uncle Hajji both do. What's important is that they should be soft and moist, which means keeping the heat low.

## The cooking medium, method and extras

You need plenty of oil - butter, though not mandatory, adds flavour - and if you'd like to bulk things out, you could also stir in some crumbled cheese, as Warren suggests, or top with Basan's garlicky yoghurt.

You'll need to use your own judgment on the timings. The tomatoes should be cooked enough to create a thick sauce, but not so much that they dry out, which will vary according to your pan and stove. A finishing touch of greenery is strictly optional.

## Perfect menemen

V GF

| | |
|---|---|
| Prep | **10 min** |
| Cook | **15-20 min** |
| Serves | **2** |
| Cost | **About £1.80 a head** |

**4 ripe tomatoes**
**About 90g green peppers**, preferably a slightly hot variety such as *sivri biber* or padrón, or a mix of green peppers and 1 mild chilli
**2 spring onions**, trimmed, or 1 small yellow or red onion, peeled
**2 tbsp vegetable or olive oil**
**Salt**
**1 tbsp butter**
**1 tsp pul biber** (aleppo pepper), or ½ tsp ground paprika
**½ tsp dried oregano** (optional)
**A pinch of sugar** (optional)
**4 eggs**
**A little chopped parsley, coriander or chives**, to finish (optional)

Halve and grate the tomatoes, discarding the skins as you go. Halve the peppers, remove and discard the stalks, pith and seeds, then cut the flesh into slices. Cut the white and green parts of the spring onions into chunky slices (or finely dice the yellow or red onion).

Put the oil in a medium frying pan on a medium-low heat, then saute the peppers, along with a good pinch of salt, and the yellow or red onion, if using, for about five minutes, until soft.

Stir in the butter, spring onions, if using, pul biber and oregano, if using, fry for a couple of minutes more, then add the tomatoes and add a pinch of sugar, if you think they need the help. Simmer gently until the colour of the tomatoes darkens and some, but not all, of the liquid has evaporated.

Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a bowl (if you'd prefer to keep the two parts of the dish slightly more separate, crack them whole into the pan instead, and stir just to break up the yolks, rather than scrambling them). Stir (or crack) in the eggs and cook, stirring, until the mixture firms up slightly. Spoon on to two plates, top with a few chopped herbs, if using, and serve with fluffy bread.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBERT BILLINGTON. FOOD STYLIST: LOÏC PARISOT



**5** Beat the eggs in a bowl, then stir into the pan and cook for a few minutes, until the mixture firms up





**6** Spoon the menemen on to plates, garnish with chopped herbs, if you like, and serve with some soft bread

# Kitchen aide
## Why is my chocolate an oily mess?

**My chocolate truffles and ganache are suddenly seizing up and turning into an oily mess. I've tried different dark chocolates and melt it in the microwave. What's going on?**
***Louise, Birmingham***

"It could be the chocolate itself, so check the ingredients, because there might be other things interfering," says Feast baker Ravneet Gill. Baking chocolate, for example, often contains added oils and fats, which make it less reliable, so she suggests using a 70-72% bar from the confectionary aisle instead. And, says Joanna Brennan, co-founder of Pump Street Chocolate in Orford, Surrey, buy the best quality you can afford: "Truffles and ganache are 100% based on the taste of the chocolate and cream." (At their simplest, they are, after all, just two parts chocolate to one part cream.)

That said, technique is by far the most likely cause for Louise's oily mess, and specifically her use of the microwave. "They get things very hot very quickly," says Gill's fellow Feast columnist Benjamina Ebuehi. "It sounds as if the temperature of the chocolate is getting really high, and causing the fat to separate and go oily." For this reason, Brennan, Gill and Ebuehi all heat their cream in a pan on the stove, then pour it over the chocolate in a heatproof bowl. "You don't want to bring the cream to a boil, but you want it hot enough that it's steaming," Ebuehi says. And chop the chocolate finely, and all roughly the same size: "That way, it will melt evenly, and you won't have to agitate it as much, which can also make it split."

Once the cream and chocolate are together, Gill leaves them to stand for 30 seconds to a minute, and then, using a hand whisk, "slowly mix from the middle only, until it resembles ganache. Then stir from the edges into the middle." You're looking only to combine the mix evenly, Gill explains, not to incorporate any air.

If, however, disaster does strike, all is not lost. When faced with a stiff and split mix, Ebuehi turns to a tablespoon or two of warm milk: "Whisk in a little at a time, and that usually brings it together." Gill, meanwhile, adds a few splashes of cold cream and beats it in with a hand blender: "It works for me every time."

And remember, the whole point of a chocolate truffle is, well, the chocolate, so don't get carried away with other flavourings (alcohol or vanilla extract, for example), which might also turn the mix liquidy. If, however, you want to up the ante, infuse the cream first. "It's my favourite way to add flavour," says Brennan, who often chucks in a vanilla pod or mint leaves. Whatever you do, though, don't bother giving your truffles a shiny, hard shell like the ones you see in the shops. That's achieved by tempering the chocolate, a process that, Brennan says, is useful to understand, but rather unnecessary when making truffles at home. "I just make a firm ganache, ball it, and roll it in cocoa powder," she says. "The magic of homemade truffles is that they really are homemade."

**Anna Berrill**

*Got a culinary dilemma?*
*Email feast@theguardian.com*



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES



# Waste not ...
## Old apples
### Tom Hunt

When I was growing up as a vegetarian teenager, I discovered my love of whole foods at healthfood shops, which, back in the 1970s, usually had a wonderfully complex aroma of spices, grains, nuts and seeds. Shelves lined the walls from floor to ceiling, all full of ingredients from the mainstream to the obscure. One product I came across back then was apple butter, a creamy apple jam with a lovely texture that I presume was the result of the natural pectin in the fruit. It's a rare find these days, but fortunately it's very easy to make; it stores well, too, preserving floury, past-their-best apples for a rainy day.

**Maple apple butter**

Cut a kilo of unpeeled apples into large chunks, then remove and compost the cores and any bruised bits, or use them to make apple cider vinegar (see theguardian.com/food). Tip the apples into a heavy-based pan, add 150ml apple cider vinegar, 180ml water, a teaspoon each of vanilla extract and sea salt, and two teaspoons of cinnamon (or American apple pie spice mix). Bring to a boil, turn down to a simmer, then half cover the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 40 minutes, until reduced by half. Remove the lid, turn up the heat a touch and add 100ml maple syrup (or 100g unrefined brown sugar, such as rapadura). Reduce for 20 minutes more, until the mixture turns thick and dark brown, and holds its shape when you stir it. Decant into a clean 500ml jar and store in the fridge for up to month (or freeze in smaller portions for up to a year).

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# Rachel Roddy
## Tales from an Italian kitchen



### Oat and raisin biscuits

"Would you like a biscuit?" Twice a day, mid-morning and mid-afternoon, Veronica pushed her trolley down the corridor and around the various departments serving tea, coffee and biscuits. Along with the boardroom drinks cabinet and stationery cupboard, Veronica was the best thing about Dad's work. Despite manoeuvring a not-small trolley covered with warm cups and pots of boiling water, she seemed to move with more ease than anyone else in the building. Welcome everywhere, she knew everyone and what they needed, be that strong tea with milk and one sugar, or black with two pills of sweetener and a chocolate digestive.

While it was communal, the small kitchen was Veronica's, and immaculate. She took the tea towels home to wash, and made sure the biscuit tins were always full. When we visited as kids, those tins were hugely important. Like my grandma's tin, they were filled with different combinations of the good ones: chocolate digestives, plain digestives, custard creams, bourbons, ginger nuts (Dad's favourite, and not only because he, too, was ginger). I want to remember Hobnobs, too, which launched in 1985, the same year as EastEnders and the Anglo-Irish agreement. And then there was the delicious story about someone in accounts who, working late, would eat the contents of an entire tin.

Our own biscuit tin fell off the top of the fridge a few weeks ago, but the resulting dent means it now closes better. Decades later, and 2,000 miles from Hemel Hempstead, I keep it filled with a good selection of Italian and English biscuits. They are usually bought, but occasionally homemade, in which case there is a good chance they will be from Biscotti: Recipes from the Kitchen of the American Academy in Rome, written by the head chef at the time, Mona Talbott, and the Sicilian pastry chef Mirella Misenti. Each of the 62 recipes begins with a short introduction, often mentioning where the biscuit fits into academy life: suitable for breakfast; a pleasing bite with coffee; as part of afternoon tea (the afternoon biscuit plate is a serious business); for scooping up pudding.



Rachel Roddy's oat and raisin cookies are 'a cross between a flapjack, a Hobnob and multi-cereal'

PHOTOGRAPH: RACHEL RODDY/THE GUARDIAN

Then there are several biscuits with specific roles: the iced ginger biscuits served after the Christmas play; the chocolate meringues that get whipped up for a birthday; Friday night chocolate cookies; and these oat-and-raisin biscuits, which are "often packed in picnics for a fellow to take to their studio when working intently on a project, or visits to archaeological sites".

While 100g raisins are soaking in 100ml warm tea (any will do; I use Yorkshire), cream 100g room-temperature butter with 100g caster sugar, then beat in an egg, a tablespoon of golden syrup and a tablespoon of treacle. Drain and squeeze the raisins, then add them to the mixture with 120g plain flour, 100g rolled oats, a pinch of salt and a teaspoon of cinnamon. Work the mixture until it forms a sticky ball, then, with floury hands, break it in two and roll each half into a log about 10cm long and the radius of a small biscuit. Wrap and chill for at least two hours (and up to a month).

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/gas 4 and line a baking tray. Using a sharp knife, cut the logs into 5mm-thick rounds and arrange on the tray, spacing them well apart. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until the edges are golden. They will be soft and delicate until they cool, so leave on the tray, or wait a bit before lifting carefully on to a rack. Store in a tight tin.

Maybe I am too easily influenced, but I fully believe that oat-and-raisin biscuits will help me work more intently, or sustain me when I do eventually visit an archaeological site. Until then, they sustain me through the morning; a cross between a flapjack, a Hobnob and Mulino Bianco multi-cereal, and dead easy to make. Now, I'll be Veronica and put the kettle on. "Would you like a biscuit?"

# Grace Dent

## 'The Korean grandmothers enjoyed me trying to eat aubergine with stainless-steel chopsticks'



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARCO KESSELER/THE GUARDIAN



New Malden is a London borough that, due to a quirk of fate, has one of the highest concentrations of good eating in the entire UK. It's a neighbour of Kingston upon Thames, and close to Worcester Park, Norbiton, Tolworth and many other semi-anonymous suburbs that never trouble the Places To Eat Before You Die foodie bucket lists. What gives the area its sparkle, however, is its Korean population, which some say numbers only about 800, but could in reality be many more, because that figure doesn't take into account all the temporary visitors, hungry South Korean and Chinese-Korean tourists and, presumably, quiet North Korean ones, too, though no one keeps much of a record on them. Regardless of the headcount, there are upwards of 20 more-than-decent Korean restaurants in New Malden, providing the chance to eat *pajeon*, *bimibap*, *bulgogi*, noodles and hotpots; there are also a load of supermarkets where you can stock up on *gochugaru* and soju, plus cafes selling sweet treats such as *patbingsu*, a shaved ice dessert topped with sweet stewed adzuki beans that, to my mind, is one of the most delicious things on earth.

If you're not hugely familiar with Korean food, consider patbingsu and the spring onion and/or seafood pancake pajeon as your gateway

### Cah Chi

79-81 Kingston Road, New Malden, 020-8949 8880. Open Tues-Sun, lunch noon-3pm (4pm Sat & Sun), dinner 5-10.30pm (10pm Sun). From about £25 a head, set lunch £12.50-£17.50, all plus drinks and service



drugs. I had been tipped off that they serve very good pajeon at Cah Chi on the Kingston Road, a family-run spot that has changed venues a few times over the years and opened here only a month or so ago, but has retained a loyal fanbase for its simple yet delicious taste of home. I visited on a wet Wednesday lunchtime, half-expecting to be one of the only customers, but found the place packed, due in no small part to Cah Chi's warm welcome, and to the fact that a round of steamed *saewoo mandu* (seafood dumplings; pictured right) comes with some of the most glorious fresh *banchan* (small plates): a dainty pile of lush, wonderfully seasoned spinach, pickled cucumber, fierce, roughly hewn kimchi and a mound of black, sticky, braised soy beans.

Then the pajeon (below) arrives, teeming with spring onion, prawns and the odd squid tentacle, all suspended in a spongy, crisp batter made of rice flour, egg, soy and gochugaru. It is good. *Very* good. Perhaps a bit thicker than the slender, elegant versions at the likes of Yori in London's fancy West End, but all the more luscious for it. A gorgeous side



of half a fried aubergine comes with a sticky glaze, its innards soft, pale and squishy, the black exterior still firmly bulbous. The whole thing is perfect, and hugely entertaining for the lunching Korean grandmothers watching me try to eat its slippery insides with stainless-steel chopsticks. What I lack in finesse, I make up for in hapless enthusiasm to transfer the deftly seasoned, soft-skinned mandu one by one into my mouth without spilling their bounteous filling down my front.

Cah Chi is one of those cheap and cheerful, but decidedly good places that's nothing to look at from the outside. It has about it a "lady-friendly", floral-wallpapered air, though it's decorated much more nicely than many hotels I've stayed in. Great staff, too, who love their community of older customers and seem to know them all by name. They're also very kind to women from Carlisle, and help me with my struggles to grill the beef bulgogi, bringing more lettuce to wrap it in, as well as extra helpings of their moreish soybean dipping paste. The bulgogi is sweet, slightly spicy and makes you wish, as you schlepp home, that you'd ordered more.

**Instafeed**



Mushroom fritters at the new Noble Rot in Mayfair. Part of your five-a-day, in batter



Wye Valley rhubarb with Szechuan pepper, rose and sour cream at The Olive Tree in Bath - pretty as a picture

**@gracedent**

My days of drinking soju are long over, so I drink barley tea, which is served in a dainty green teapot. I wasn't much in the mood for anything sweet, either, but was ever so politely pushed by the lovely waitress into a small scoop of green tea ice-cream topped with a large blob of red-bean paste.

New Malden is an umami-drenched patch of extreme deliciousness that's only 20 minutes from Waterloo by train; sure, it's not really en route to anywhere, but it is an eating destination in its own right. There are several theories as to how it became so very Korean: some say it's because the ambassador used to live here, others that it's because of the relatively affordable house prices (well, for London, anyway). It can't be because of the splendour of the train station, which feels older than time itself and is hidden behind a moody tower block. This area is proof, however, that when the stars align, the dining options can be quite incredible.

Cah Chi isn't trying to change the world; it's just quietly representing skilful Korean cooking and creating a haven for hungry passers-by. Consider me a fan.

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# WHAT'S ON

20-26 May 2023

## 'ONLY GOD CAN CANCEL ME!' WANDA SYKES COMES OUT FIGHTING



The Guardian



**That's entertainment** *Wanda Sykes in her Netflix show*

She ditched life as a government agent to become a standup, one so fearless she even has a 'tampon lasso'. The unstoppable Wanda Sykes talks to **Ellen E Jones** about cancelled men, coming out – and calling out Roseanne

# Yikes, it's Sykes!

About halfway through her new Netflix special, Wanda Sykes squats down and mimes pulling a tampon out from between her legs. To the noisy delight of her sold-out live audience, she swings the imaginary sanitary product round her head like a lasso. It's not just an anarchic attempt to sum up the kind of bad behaviour that goes on in public toilets – it's also a takedown of transphobic moral panic. After all, these spaces that people are freaking out about admitting trans women to – they're not exactly the most pleasant places in the world. "I welcome my trans sisters into the ladies' room," she shrugs to the crowd. "Maybe you'll make us do better, y'know?"

At 59, and with 30 years' standup experience behind her, Wanda Sykes can segue from the personal to the political, and back again, in a hot flash. Her latest special, I'm an Entertainer, has material on her family life, how medical sexism has let down menopausal women and why Black people can't be "weird" for fear of being murdered in the street – ("We have to fit the stereotype … [but] white people do weird shit all the time. Renaissance fairs – what the fuck is that?") – which she switches between with the effortless groove of a Soul Train line dancer. Is she ever *not* enjoying herself? "In the early stages, when I'm trying new stuff, I'm anxious to see what it's gonna do," she muses from her Pennsylvania home. "But once it's all there … *Man*. That's when it's fun."

"Tampon lasso", as it shall henceforth be known, is also the moment when the truth of Sykes's recent statement "Only God can cancel me" becomes most evident. This was her magnificent retort during an appearance on Kevin Hart's podcast, when the host attempted to draw her on the vexed issue of "cancel culture". Hart, who lost out on the Oscars hosting gig in 2019 after a series of his old homophobic tweets resurfaced, expressed anxiety about comedy's overly "political" climate, but Sykes was having none of it. And she still isn't: "To me, the whole complaint about cancel culture is a lot of men – especially straight men – who are just pissed that they can't say things any more, y'know?" she says, adopting her usual onstage tone – calm, commonsensical and mildly sarcastic. "And it's not like you *can't* say these things. You can say them, but now there's just consequences. So that's why I say I can't get cancelled. Only God can say: 'All right, Wanda, that's enough.'"

So far, God shows no sign She's tiring of Wanda. Since getting her big break in 1997 as a writer-performer on The Chris Rock Show (alongside a pre-#MeToo Louis CK), Sykes has gigged regularly, produced multiple standup specials and had scene-stealing roles in hit movies and cult sitcoms. Recently, she played an eccentric law professor in The Good Fight and reprised her role as slick publicist Shuli Kucerac in The Other Two. Next up, she's seeking projects that show off her skills as a serious dramatic actor. "I'm working on that now! I can't say much about it, but it's a film and it's already been written, so we'll see."

If Sykes is uncancellable, then, it's not because she's any more risk-averse than her peers. Indeed, her whole career has been one giant leap into the unknown – certainly from the perspective of her banker mum and US Army colonel dad. She describes them as "typically African American



parents – y'know; it was church and it was strict", and says they were terrified when she decided to leave her "good government job" at the National Security Agency (NSA). She had top-level security clearance, but insists it was dull office-based work. ("Anything I knew then that was top secret is probably on Wikipedia by now," she has said.) Still, her parents were alarmed by her career about-turn. "They thought I'd lost it. They just prayed a lot." Even in childhood, Sykes remembers her family being distinctly unimpressed by the budding comic in their midst. "I did a lot of observational material, but I didn't have the punchlines yet. Like, if my mother's friend had a wig that was crooked, I would point that out, but I didn't have a joke for it … That got me in a lot of trouble."

From humble beginnings, Sykes developed a full comedic skillset and aside from being a prolific actor and writer in other people's shows, she now runs her own. The Upshaws is a working-class Black family sitcom set in Indianapolis, which will soon launch its fourth season on Netflix. "I do enjoy working with a group," she says of her role as co-creator, co-star and executive producer. "It's fun when it's a family … Standup is my first love and it's what pretty much got me everything else, but it's also a little lonely at times."

Such statements suggest that Sykes may be that rarest of showbiz phenomena: an emotionally healthy and well-adjusted comedian. This derives in part, she says, from the huge creative liberation of coming out as a lesbian in 2008, aged 44: "You don't want to be on stage trying to be funny and having that other little piece of your brain being occupied by: 'Are they gonna find out? What if I slip up?' Now I'm just 100% there." She stopped chemically relaxing her hair around the same time. "I got tired of getting my hair done. As a kid I always wanted an afro like the Jackson 5. So it got to a point where I was like y'know what? Fuck this … let's go natural and see what happens!" What happened was the emergence of her signature look, iconic enough that a 30ft hair silhouette is the stage backdrop in the new special.

Other aspects of her mid-life reinvention were trickier. Because Sykes was already famous when she came out, it was a two-step process – first personal, then public. Telling her parents was by far the scariest part: "It took them a while to accept, and for us to rebuild our relationship." Fifteen years on, she's still happily married to her wife – an interior designer from France – and they're raising 14-year-old twins Olivia and Lucas in a level of comfort and privilege that sharply contrasts with Sykes's own upbringing. "It's the thing of, do you push them to get into honours classes? Or do you just let them do their thing, because – I'm gonna sound like an asshole for saying this – getting into a great college, for them, does not mean success or failure. They're set up pretty nicely now, right?"

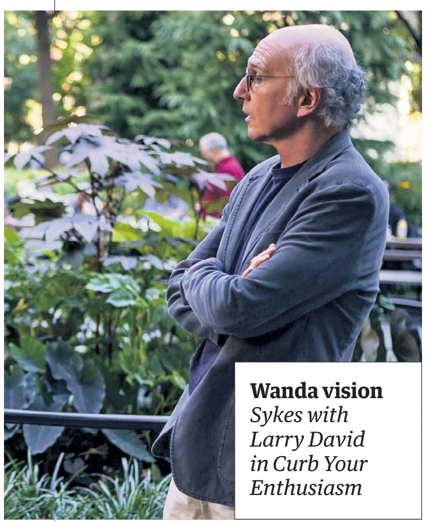
Being married to a French woman also helps to maintain that work-life balance: "They love vacation. I mean, they *live* for it. It's like a right for them." But while Sykes appreciates the continental influence on her lifestyle, as an ex-NSA operative and the daughter of a US Army colonel, she will for ever be a US patriot. She's so patriotic she even wears a red, white and blue jacket on stage for the special. "I feel like with as much blood of my ancestors that has been shed to build this country, this is my country. I feel like I have more of a right here than anyone else."

It's a kind of patriotism too that compels Sykes to speak out on issues others consider "too political" for comedy. There's an element of self-parody in her turns on Curb Your Enthusiasm – she typically pops up out of nowhere to side-eye Larry's casual or accidental racism – but Sykes really is the person who'll call out her comedy peers when necessary. She proved that in 2018, when Roseanne Barr posted a racist tweet about a senior member of the Obama administration, and Sykes was the first to publicly disassociate herself from the then-hit Roseanne reboot. "Honestly, I never, like, *fell out* with her. I just made a statement that I could no longer be on that show, because of the comment."

She is similarly straightforward – never scolding – in her approach to gender identity. This isn't new ground for Netflix specials, but while the likes of Dave Chappelle and Ricky Gervais generated controversy by ridiculing trans people, Sykes's I'm an Entertainer takes a markedly different tack. "I want the community to know that I'm with them. I think it's important to let people know where you stand, especially with all the comments everyone else has been making."

So while other comedians tie themselves up in anguished knots over what you can and can't say these days, the uncancellable Wanda Sykes just gets on with being funny. After all, she faces racism, sexism and homophobia on a daily basis – all of which are far scarier than falling foul of social media moralists. "I don't have that fear – I think it's just knowing who you are and what you will say and won't say." Wanda Sykes knows who she is. It is, after all, the title of her new show.

*Wanda Sykes: I'm an Entertainer is on Netflix on Tuesday*



**Wanda vision**
*Sykes with Larry David in Curb Your Enthusiasm*

KATHERINE AND MARIEL TYLER/AARON RICKETTS/NETFLIX; PEACOCK; HBO/SHUTTERSTOCK

## *Poker Face*

# *Natasha Lyonne's perfect detective show turns up the fun-o-meter until it explodes*

**Joel Golby**



Whatever happened to fun? We used to have it, didn't we? Mr Blobby bursting through things, stuff like that. But in recent years, it feels, fun has receded a bit, and we've replaced it with other things that don't hit as hard: overearnestness or mawkishness or choreographed sentimentality. Someone really trembling while they deliver a series-closing monologue about their emotions. You couldn't have Del Boy falling through a bar these days, could you? That's because we're in a fun drought, the dust of it whirling round us like old glitter.

Thank goodness then for Poker Face, the enormously successful mystery-a-week show that debuted in the US earlier this year and has finally come over to Sky Max (from Friday), and which remembers throughout what fun is. First there is the casting of Natasha Lyonne, who is always fun – her own vibrating beacon of freestanding fun, even – but is especially fun when she just plays the character of Natasha Lyonne, which is exactly what she is doing here. Then there's that little tweak to the "unlikely detective" trope – Lyonne's Charlie Cale has the innate ability to sense when someone's telling a lie (her catchphrase is just "bullshit", which is – you guessed it) – and uses it to unpuzzle strange murders and bizarre crimes on a run-from-the-mob-boss road trip across the US.

Even the decision to place each episode in a series of unlikely, salty, rust belt backwaters – at a Nascar track, or an out-of-town petrol station – is fun. It feels as if they had fun behind the scenes making them up, and it makes the whole thing feel more lively and interesting throughout. It's also nice to be reminded places other than "Manhattan" or "LA" exist, as almost every TV show produced in America tends to forget.

Each hour-long episode gives 12 to 17 minutes of Lyonne-less backstory over to the guest stars that week – from Chloë Sevigny to Adrien Brody to Tim Blake Nelson to Jameela Jamil, all of whom are having enormous amounts of the f-word – and every episode wrings every last drop out of its runtime, each one feeling rich and textured. There's some ongoing storyline where Charlie's history will catch up with her, probably. There's a couple of running in-jokes and some premonition stuff that I think will come to a resolution towards the end. But, for now, here Natasha Lyonne is, mopping out a urinal and 25 minutes away from solving a crime. And it is so, so fun.

Poker Face is a Rian Johnson creation, and I'm glad he's back on form – Brick and Looper were so good, then The Last Jedi was really long and then for better or worse Knives Out happened and Glass Onion after that – because Poker Face feels like all the good bits from his previous works (knotty puzzles solved in unlikely ways; dialogue that's actually smart; a constant but never-looming threat) and none of the bad bits (Luke Skywalker taking about 15 hours to die; a big onion made of glass).

**Guest stars from Chloë Sevigny to Adrien Brody are all having enormous amounts of the f-word**

The series has already been compared to the heyday of Columbo – there is admittedly something very " … just one more thing" about Lyonne's performance – and that's not necessarily because of the mystery-a-week format. It's more the dense character study-ness of it, the fact that each guest star has a part to get their teeth stuck into rather than just being a bland eyewitness, and then Natasha Lyonne as a charisma whirlwind in the middle of it. The show finds new ways to reveal or not reveal Charlie's strange superpower; fun new twists on lying and telling the truth; grey-area moral quandaries of every flavour; exploring those dark instincts we all have (jealousy, greed, hubris) and throwing a few slightly overdone murders in there and turning up the fun-o-meter until it explodes. Not every episode ends in a neat resolution, or a cop waiting there with a pair of handcuffs and a sullen expression. Every single decision they made about this one they got right.

Hey, come on. Been a bad year, hasn't it? They're taking Succession away from you. Love Island wasn't even good this time. Don't you think you deserve this? There's no fun to be had out there, in the real world. Believe me. Turn the TV on. It's a long time since you had fun and you've forgotten how good it is. Come on. Trust me. Watch Poker Face. Have just a little bit of fun.



*Pick of the week*
**Maryland**
**Monday, 9pm, ITV1**

Sisters Becca and Rosaline are chalk and cheese, but they reunite when their mother is found dead on a beach on the Isle of Man - somewhere they think she had no connection to. As the siblings reminisce while investigating, old wounds reopen and secrets are discovered. It turns out that their mother was living a double life. "Patient" is the politest way of describing this drama, which runs across the week. But what it lacks in propulsion, it makes up for with the performances of Suranne Jones and Eve Best. And if they aren't enough to tempt you, how about the appearance of Hollywood royalty Stockard Channing, whose character was friends with the mother. *Hollie Richardson*

## Saturday

*Pick of the day*
**Afterglow**
**9pm, BBC Four**
A cervical cancer diagnosis on her 40th birthday isn't going to stop nurse Ester Sand (Nina Ellen Ødegård) from dressing up as a bowl of fruit and partying the night away. The opening episode of this charming Norwegian drama tugs at the heartstrings but there's also plenty of comedy as Ester's friends and family - who are unaware of her news - ready themselves for fancy dress and forced dancing. *HR*

**Pointless Celebrities**
**7.35pm, BBC One**
More celebs, including cricketer Phil Tufnell, ripe from the South African jungle, vocal coach Cece Lightfoot and Five's Ritchie Neville, attempt to keep their scores low. En route, we discover how the windscreen wiper was invented - and why you shouldn't name a band after the number of members in it. *Ali Catterall*

**Pet Shop Boys at the BBC**
**7.35pm, BBC Two**
Very introspective behaviour, actually: an evening celebrating Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe kicks off with a rummage through the archives followed by an episode of Reel Stories where the duo reflect on notable career clips with Dermot O'Leary. The cherry on top is a hit-packed Hyde Park show from 2019. *Graeme Virtue*



*Afterglow, Sat*


*Ithaka: The Fight to Free Assange, Sun*

**Annika**
**9.15pm, BBC One**
For Nicola Walker fans who missed this Scottish murder detective series when it first aired on Alibi, here's a chance to watch it in a prime spot (arguably its rightful home, as it is based on a Radio 4 drama). After relocating to Glasgow with her teenage daughter, DI Annika Strandhed's first case is a murdered man with a harpoon piercing his head in the Clyde. *HR*

**The 1% Club**
**9.20pm, ITV1**
This week, comic Lee Mack targets contestant Matt Hancock - a quizzer capable of locating the camera more nimbly than his political namesake. Among the 100 hopefuls also lies an aspiring PM who, in true political style, pledges to invest the £100k jackpot in a hot tub. *Danielle De Wolfe*

**Later … With Jools Holland**
**9.50pm, BBC Two**
The live sessions show is back yet again, and is kicking off the series with new songs from Hozier (his 2014 performance of Take Me to Church remains the most watched on the show ever). The lineup also boasts Arlo Parks, and music photographer Jill Furmanovsky will be talking about the retrospective exhibition of her work at the Manchester Central Library. *HR*


*Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland, Mon*

## Sunday

*Pick of the day*
**Ithaka: The Fight to Free Assange**
**10.20pm, ITV1**
"Torture is a tool used to send a warning to others. It is most effective when it is inflicted in public." The words of Nils Melzer - the UN's special rapporteur on torture from 2016 to 2022 - open this remarkable documentary about Julian Assange's arrest in 2019 and his time in prison awaiting extradition to the US for one of the largest ever leaks of government secrets. His father John Shipton and wife Stella Assange share the family's complex journey. *HR*

**Ten Pound Poms**
**9pm, BBC One**
The promised paradise has quickly turned sour in this top-notch drama about the Brits who migrated to Australia after the second world war. Following the drunken hit-and-run, Terry takes his family to hideous Dean's house for a barbecue in a bid to act normal. Meanwhile, Kate's real motives for the move have been revealed: she's looking for the son who was taken from her. *HR*

**Malpractice**
**9pm, ITV1**
Did the fentanyl that killed Eva Owusu come from the very hospital where she was treated and died? Lucinda (Niamh Algar) is convinced there's a dodgy connection, but people aren't likely to believe a desperate addict doctor who's just been suspended. All will come to light in this revelatory final episode of the hospital thriller. *HR*

**I Kissed a Boy**
**9pm, BBC Three**
The casually groundbreaking gay dating show set in a fabulous Italian villa continues. After an initial rush of pool frolics and heart-to-hearts, the first elimination looms: will it be Josh or Bobski who has to pack their trunks? That departure is just the start, as host Dannii Minogue has more twists to reveal. *GV*

**Depp v Heard**
**9pm, Channel 4**
After the defamation case that set the internet ablaze with takes and memes, this one-off documentary looks at the trial by social media of Amber Heard. Unfortunately, the result is an hour of cobbled-together TikTok material - much of it by Johnny Depp's stans - that sheds little light on the affair. *Hannah J Davies*

**The Man Who Played With Fire**
**9pm, Sky Documentaries**
"You can get $2m dollars if you kill Olof Palme." The second instalment sees warnings of a CIA hit fall on deaf ears. Yet journalist Stieg Larsson deemed the hypothesis plausible. But one theory linked to the 1986 assassination of Sweden's PM, a truly remarkable classified CIA file found in his possession, could change everything. *DDW*

## Monday

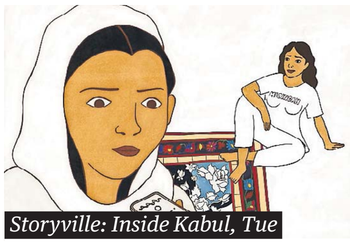
*Pick of the day*
**Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland**
**9pm, BBC Two**
British people sometimes struggle to accept that for several decades, up to the Good Friday agreement of 1998, civil war raged in parts of our country. This sweeping yet intimate series (from the makers of the equally superb Once Upon a Time in Iraq) is a fitting act of remembrance; hearing from antagonists on both sides but, more importantly, from people simply trying to live normal lives in the shadow of violence. *Phil Harrison*

**Steeltown Murders**
**9pm, BBC One**
The dramatisation of the Llandarcy murders reaches a crucial point as DI Bethell (Philip Glenister) corners Sandra Newton's stepdad Dai (Keith Allen). "Tea and sympathy until we get his DNA" is Bethell's approach, and he's going to need it as he has disturbing news for Dai and Pat when new evidence from 1973 comes to light. *Hannah Verdier*

**Succession**
**9pm, Sky Atlantic**
It's penultimate episode time, and things just got really ugly. Will Roman and Kendall completely cut off Shiv after discovering her alliance with Matsson? Will Shiv make Greg wear all of his organs outside of his body for snitching? Does Tom have any regrets about recent events after finding out he is going to be a father? While the final series might be the funniest yet, it's also reaching potentially irrevocable levels of nastiness. *HR*

**Barry**
**9pm, Sky Comedy**
"Hey, man. I got two people here who want to say hi to you." But before we get to that shocker of a climax, there's a gathering of some assassins (one of whom is proudly compared to Wile E Coyote, so possibly not an encouraging sign) and Gene receives a promising casting lead. *AC*

**My Name Is Reeva**
**11.05pm, Channel 4**
A decade after Oscar Pistorius shot his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp dead in his home, Warren Batchelor



*Storyville: Inside Kabul, Tue*

revisits the case and its aftermath with this heavy three-part documentary. It starts by speaking to Steenkamp's parents, Barry and June, ahead of meeting Pistorius as part of his parole process. *HR*

## Tuesday

*Pick of the day*
**Storyville: Inside Kabul**
**10pm, BBC Four**
Raha and Marwa are two young women who, when the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, exchanged voice notes about their separate ongoing journeys. Raha stayed in Kabul where she was surrounded by violence, while Marwa left with her husband and found a refugee camp in Abu Dhabi. This beautifully animated documentary uses these voice notes to illustrate their experiences of the crisis. *HR*

**Waterloo Road**
**8pm, BBC One**
The serviceable school drama continues, peppered with a host of former soap stars and material that - accordingly - feels somewhere between Grange Hill and Corrie. This week, troubled student Kelly-Jo seeks an important diagnosis, but her aunt Nicky (Kym Marsh) has other concerns for her welfare. *HJD*

**Love Your Garden**
**8pm, ITV1**
Dedicating her life to combating knife crime following her son's murder, campaigner Yvonne Lawson has earned Alan Titchmarsh's green-fingered assistance. The mission: transform her Enfield garden into a tranquil paradise. Additionally, Katie Rushworth explores the healing properties of nature. *DDW*

**Colin from Accounts**
**10pm, BBC Two**
It's round two of Ashley's 30th birthday celebrations - and just when you thought they couldn't get any more excruciating, she introduces "boomer" Gordon to her awful group of millennial friends, who dare to order a glass of rosé at his brewery. The arrival of Ashley's ex is the icing on a soggy cake. *HR*

**Perry Mason**
**10.05pm, Sky Atlantic**
The 30s-set legal reboot continues its second run, with Matthew Rhys as our titular PI turned lawman. As conspiracy theories mount, unsavoury new evidence forces Perry to reconsider the Gallardos' version of events in the Brooks McCutcheon case - and to blow off some serious steam. *HJD*

**Rain Dogs**
**10.40pm, BBC One**
It's the finale of Cash Carraway's plucky comedy-drama and Costello has lost the book deal. Her well-meaning neighbour doesn't exactly offer comforting words: "Most books are shite anyway." As she continues on a downward spiral of booze and self-loathing, we're given an ending that heavily hints a second series is on the cards. *HR*

## Wednesday

*Pick of the day*
**The Great British Sewing Bee**
**9pm, BBC One**
A top with a twist in the middle sounds like an easy first task in this year's Sewing Bee, right? The calibre of those taking to their machines is high: Asmaa is a consultant breast surgeon who made a beautiful bra for a patient after a mastectomy; Catherine is a Bafta-winning games designer who uses fabric patterns that match her tattoos; and glitter-loving Matthew was taught to sew by his late nan. And yet, judges Patrick Grant and Esme Young poke plenty of holes in the results. *HR*

**Location, Location, Location**
**8pm, Channel 4**
This week's episode of the tone-deaf property series features Karen and Richard, with a dream budget (more than £1m) but who constantly fall at the final hurdle - somebody fetch the tiny violin. More relatably, renters Camilla and Liam can't keep up with the 13% increase in house prices during their search. *HR*

**11 Minutes: America's Deadliest Mass Shooting**
**9pm, BBC Two**
In the conclusion of a documentary on the 2017 massacre in Las Vegas, we deal with the aftermath. After moving testimony from first responders and stunning police bodycam footage, the killer's motives are briefly assessed - but the focus remains on victims, their lives for ever changed. *Jack Seale*

**Kids**
**9pm, Channel 4**
After three years of living in care with six different foster families, 16-year-old Havana has moved into her own flat ("I've always had to be really mature for my age"). In the final part of what's been a brilliant series about life after care, we see this sunny, bright teenager embrace friendship, a possible connection with family she's not met before, and hope for the future. *HR*

**Rookie Nurses**
**9pm, BBC Three**
Bike accidents, seizures and malfunctioning medical machines … it's all in a day's work for the eponymous young graduate nurses, in another double helping of wails from Wales. While Nurse Leah helps a patient through a long, post-surgery recovery, Caitlin faces a challenge on her first shift. *AC*

**Naked Attraction**
**10pm, Channel 4**
The magnificently named Zeus is the main focus of this episode of the body-positive dating show. Zeus is trans, bisexual and also a massive Dungeons and Dragons nerd: can someone push all those buttons simultaneously or is Zeus expecting too much? *PH*

## Thursday

*Pick of the day*
**Strike: Inside the Unions**
**9pm, BBC Two**
The UK is seeing the biggest wave of strikes in a generation - and this two-parter goes behind the scenes to find out exactly what's happening. First, the RMT rail union, whose general secretary Mick Lynch says his piece along with those on the picket lines. The series also follows those involved with the Royal College of Nurses and Unite, though the government declined to take part. *HR*

**Gordon Ramsay's Future Food Stars**
**9pm, BBC One**
Ramsay takes the three finalists to Ibrox Stadium - where his football career with Rangers ended and his cooking career started - to take on the last task that could win them £150,000 investment. They'll need to create a Scottish limited edition of their foodie products to prove themselves worthy business partners. *HR*



*Inside No 9, Thu*



*The Great British Sewing Bee, Wed*

**Last King of the Cross**
**9pm, Sky Max**
Following a brutal opening episode, the messy Australian crime drama - which doesn't have the character depth to stop the violence and nudity feeling gratuitous - continues. Johnny (Lincoln Younes) looks to acquire his first bar. *JS*

**Inside No 9**
**10pm, BBC Two**
It's the last episode of Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith's dark comedy anthology series - and what a stomach-churner it is. Longterm couple Joe and Chas head to their holiday home in the woods to make the most of their time together following Joe's cancer diagnosis. But things take a turn after a luxury mud bath. *HR*

**Open House: The Great Sex Experiment**
**10pm, Channel 4**
The sexperiment continues, with childhood sweethearts Natalie and Tom wanting to spice up their relationship - will a hot tub with an open couple do the trick? Also, last week's couple Chanice and Richardo are still at the retreat - it probably takes a lot of time to organise an orgy for 15 people in your bedroom, to be fair. *HR*

**Meet the Richardsons**
**10pm, Dave**
The mid-marriage crisis meta-comedy continues and trouble looms in the shape of Jon's 40th birthday. He isn't a birthday enthusiast: "Fingers crossed I'll end up in a coma," he deadpans. Lucy has a series of stressful "treats" planned, including a private cooking lesson from a grumpy Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. *PH*

## Friday

*Pick of the day*
**The Lateish Show With Mo Gilligan**
**10pm, Channel 4**
It has been a short run for one of the most chaotic and fun Friday night fixtures, with this being the fourth and final episode of the raucous chatshow. Adrian Lester - whom we'll see in Disney series The Ballad of Renegade Nell - will be joining in the action, along with the nicest chap in pop music, Eurovision's Sam Ryder. *HR*

**Hidden Treasures of the National Trust**
**9pm, BBC Two**
There's a focus on 20th-century treasures this week, starting with Paul McCartney's mid-terrace family home in south Liverpool (he and John Lennon wrote I Saw Her Standing There in the living room). Next, Dudmaston Hall in Birmingham is a 17th-century mansion that boasts a modern art gallery with Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth works. *HR*

**Sister Boniface Mysteries**
**9pm, Drama**
An affectionate parody of Blue Peter kicks off season two of this cosy 1960s-set whodunnit starring Lorna Watson as a sleuthing nun. When the overbearing producer of kids' TV show Jolly Roger is found dead, Sister Boniface must grill a trio of presenters while also keeping tabs on a parrot called "Poopdeck Pete". Great fun. *GV*

**Black Ops**
**9.30pm, BBC One**
Katherine Kelly guest stars as Kirsty in this week's episode of the cop caper - was Clinton dating her or was she also part of the secret mission? Dom and Kay are adamant it's the latter, and beg her for help over banoffee cronuts. Meanwhile, Clinton's body has been found on Walthamstow marshes. *HR*

**The Chris & Rosie Ramsey Show**
**10.40pm, BBC One**
The husband-and-wife duo and podcasters continue their warm, low-stakes chatshow featuring other well-known couples. Come for the background TV vibe, stay for the cringe-inducing audience confessions of Please Keep Me Anonymous. *HJD*

**Bump**
**11.25pm, BBC One**
After a blazing start, the comedy-drama about a teen mum in Sydney has, in its third season, settled down into an undemanding yarn. Relationships and friendships, old and new, now cause Oly (Nathalie Morris ) to question what sort of adult she wants to be when she's not parenting. *JS*

ITV; JAMES STACK/BBC; JOHN PLATT/BBC



*Pick of the week*

## Poker Face

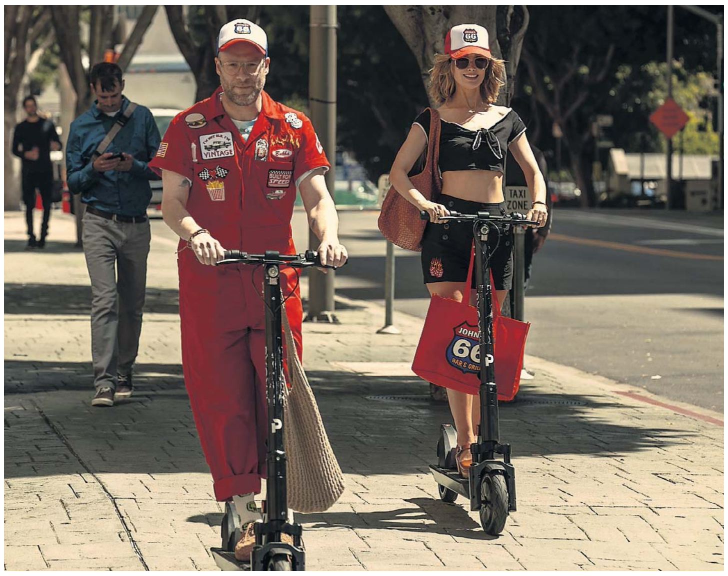
**Now TV & Sky Max, from Friday**

Charlie Cale (Natasha Lyonne) is a beer-glugging casino worker with an infallible ability to detect lies. After her friend is killed and Charlie attracts the baleful attention of casino security by poking around, she's forced to go on the road where she uses her inbuilt bullshit detector to work as a detective. The case-of-the-week format can feel formulaic but the show's trump card is the warmth Lyonne brings to the role – her gift elicits honesty from everyone near her but she uses her powers for good, seeking understanding rather than vindication. Adrien Brody, in fine, scenery-chewing form, co-stars as the casino manager – unnerved and fascinated by Charlie's peculiar skills. *Phil Harrison*

## Platonic

**Apple TV+, from Wednesday**

Male-female friendship is an under-explored subject – the temptation is always to add sexual tension to any relationship. This sitcom starring Rose Byrne and Seth Rogen is all the better for not taking that route: when old friends Sylvia (Byrne) and Will (Rogen) reconnect in mid-life, it's obvious that they have chemistry but as friends only. Platonic is good at communicating a frequently unspoken reality of ageing – namely that lots of people don't change that much, they just feel like they should. Once Sylvia and Will are back in each other's lives, amusing disruption to so-called maturity soon ensues. *PH*





## Prehistoric Planet

**Apple TV+, from Monday**

David Attenborough's vocal presence gives this spectacular series (now into season two) the feel of a speculative, sci-fi blockbuster version of the kind of glorious natural history programming consistently churned out by the BBC. We're dealing with Earth's deep past here, stunningly rendered by the visual effects team behind films such as The Lion King and The Jungle Book. It's an uncanny and freakishly convincing viewing experience, as triceratops butt heads, tiny T rex babies pop out of eggs and pterodactyls soar above. *PH*



## MerPeople

**Netflix, from Tuesday**

You may not be aware of the phenomenon of mermaiding but, according to this self-consciously quirky series, swimming and parading in a life-size mermaid fin is now a half-billion dollar industry. But where did it come from? Hannah Mermaid claims to have been "the first professional freelance mermaid in the world" and seems proud at this eccentric hobby's growth. But is it just playing dress-up? The mermaids interviewed here would furiously disagree – to some of them, it's both a personal identity and a performance art form. *PH*



## American Born Chinese

**Disney+, from Wednesday**

"This is Wei-Chen. He's Chinese like you." Jin Wang's schoolteacher isn't quite right – Wei-Chen is actually Taiwanese. But in all other respects, she's doing a reluctant Jin a favour by introducing him to his new best friend. This comedy-drama is adapted from a graphic novel by Gene Lueng Yang – it's a heady blend of immigrant story, coming-of-age drama and metaphysical martial arts fantasy, courtesy of regular and often startling lurches into arcane battles connected to Chinese mythology. Michelle Yeoh, Stephanie Hsu and Ben Wang star. *PH*

## James May: Oh Cook!

**Prime Video, from Wednesday**

The Top Gear retirement community that is Prime Video opens its doors again, this time disgorging a second series of James May's cooking show. May's kitchen shtick continues to be a mix of everyman bafflement and mild curiosity about more refined culinary techniques, only with a minor twist – May is now edging away from banter in the direction of practical advice, albeit offered without any real confidence. Of course, May's incompetence is, in itself, a performance; but anything that gets more people into the kitchen is surely a good thing. *PH*



## Fubar

**Netflix, from Thursday**

For his first leading role in a TV series, Arnold Schwarzenegger plays a deadpan but fearsome former CIA operative whose capacity for ultra-efficient violence is only matched by his dry wit. He's lured out of retirement for one last job – only to find himself working alongside a younger agent Emma (Monica Barbaro) who also happens to be his daughter. Turns out that father and daughter have been lying to each other – neither knew the truth about each other's work until now. Generation gap hilarity (with a side order of lethal force) follows. *PH*



PEACOCK; PAUL SARKIS/APPLE

# *Catchup TV*

## *A tough Brits abroad drama and two rock'n'roll tragedies*



### Ten Pound Poms
**BBC One/iPlayer**
★★★☆☆

Ten Pound Poms tells the story of the Brits who responded to adverts in the 1950s inviting them to move to Australia for the sum of £10. We see it through the eyes of Terry (Warren Brown), a man with PTSD left to languish in Stockport, still suffering flashbacks to his time as a prisoner of war. Terry is a drinker, a gambler and a fighter, and his wife, Annie (Faye Marsay), has had enough of him spending his wages at the pub. What they find is not the white-picket-fence Australia the brochure promised. The Australians are no-nonsense semi-sadists, sick to death of "whingeing poms". Not quite the Sunday night period drama that you might expect, then. It doesn't sugarcoat the nastier side of the experience, but it does allow idealism to peek through. *Rebecca Nicholson*

### The Stones and Brian Jones
**BBC Two/ iPlayer**
★★★★☆

Nick Broomfield's biography of the Rolling Stone whose drug- and booze-ravaged body was pulled from his swimming pool on 3 July 1969 is at its best when telling his story through the women who loved him - and whom he, at least temporarily, loved. As Broomfield notes, the Stones' manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, realised that Mick Jagger and Keith Richards could make the group a hit factory - and that Jones, who did not write, was expendable. By the summer of 1967, Jones was a falling star. His lack of self-esteem was worsened by Jagger and Richards' creativity. He became increasingly uncertain of his own talents. He fell back on scotch and coke, downers and LSD, seeking succour in things that, as Charlie Watts says, he was neither physically nor mentally tough enough to handle. *Stuart Jeffries*

### High Desert
**Apple TV+**
★★★☆☆

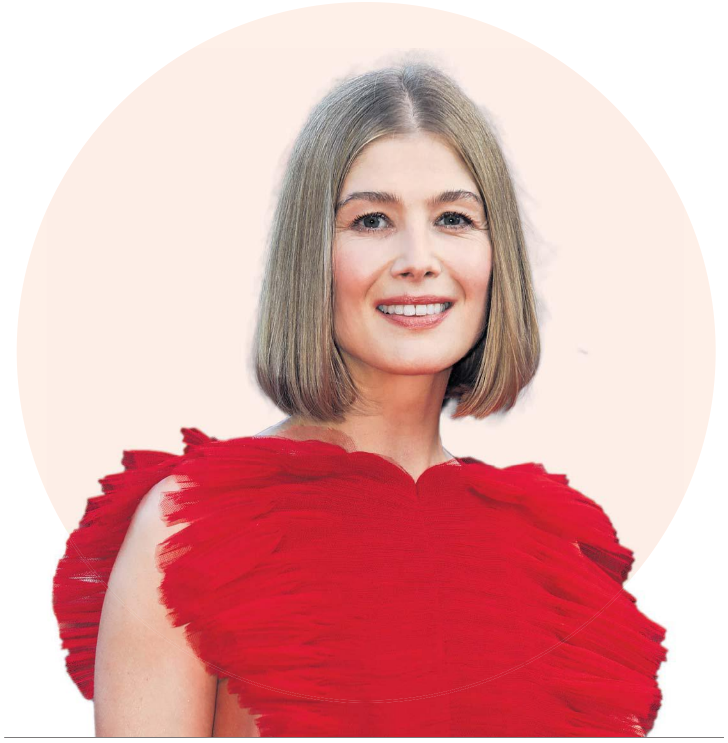
Patricia Arquette plays Peggy, a lovably absurd figure whom we meet hosting a party in her SoCal home for Thanksgiving 2003. Then the DEA puts an abrupt end to what turns out to have been a drug-deal-fuelled lifestyle. We next meet her 10 years later: after the death of her mother, pressure is on Peggy to find a job. When her friend Carol is ripped off by investigator Bruce Harvey, Peggy goes round to collect the cash and finds her calling as a PI. That it makes sense at all is down to Arquette, whose charisma draws the whole thing together. High Desert looks gorgeous, there is an endless parade of side characters, each brighter and kookier than the last, and the New Agey energy and stupidity of southern California is as much a presence as they are. *Lucy Mangan*

### Matt Willis: Fighting Addiction
**BBC One/iPlayer**
★★★☆☆

An intimate, often tearful exploration of musician Matt Willis's decades-long battle with drug and alcohol addiction. Celebrity addiction is a well-trodden subject, but less explored is its devastating impact on families. Willis's film, in which he sets off around the country and into his own past to try to find out why he is as he is, is in equal parts his wife Emma's film. The two of them attend a project supporting families of addicts - and it's the first time Emma has sought help. At the age of 18, Willis was signing a six-figure record contract. By 22 he was an addict. During a later relapse that "flabbergasted" Emma as it followed eight years of sobriety, Willis was taking six grams of cocaine a day. "It was not rock'n'roll," he says. "It was really sad." Today, he's sober "but I'm not recovered". *Chitra Ramaswamy*

JOHN PLATT/BBC; STÉPHANE CARDINALE/GETTY

# *Audio*



## Podcasts

*Pick of the week*

### People Who Knew Me
**BBC Sounds, episodes weekly from Tuesday**

Rosamund Pike stars as Emily, a woman who faked her own death on 9/11 and is now living happily in California. That's until she's diagnosed with breast cancer and decides to confront her past. Pike is natural and relatable, which puts this adaptation of Kim Hooper's novel streets ahead of the average radio drama. Convincing characters, 15-minute episodes and a gripping storyline fuel a need to hear more. *Hannah Verdier*

### Smoke Screen: Just Say You're Sorry
**Widely available, episodes weekly**

This investigative podcast series has dealt with a sex cult, a fake priest and a puppy pimp, but now turns its attention to James Holland, known as the "serial killer whisperer" for his interrogation skills. Journalist Maurice Chammah digs deep into Holland's backstory to find out how he really squeezed out those confessions. *HV*

### The Fighty Pucks
**Widely available, episodes weekly**

Claire Crofton tells the entertaining story of the most violent ice-hockey team around, the Danbury Trashers, led by AJ Galante and his father Jimmy. Expect cheerful anecdotes about AJ's childhood, including the time the Rock came to his birthday party, though it's clear the team's fierce competitive instincts are real. *HV*

### Retold: The Stoner Arms Dealers
**Widely available, episodes weekly**

How did two stoner kids become arms dealers? James McAvoy (pictured above right) is the narrator for the first of four standalone stories, with this one focusing on "War Dogs" Efraim Diveroli and David Packouz. News that their supplies have been seized just as they're tucking into sushi sets the scene nicely. *HV*



### Scamanda
**Widely available, episodes weekly**

Back in 2012, just before Instagram usurped the blogosphere, a young woman called Amanda C Riley blogged about her cancer journey after a Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosis. In this eight-part series, journalist Charlie Webster reveals how Riley went on to scam her community and solicit more than $100,000 in donations to help pay for treatments she never received. *Hollie Richardson*



## Radio

### The Ballad of Syd & Morgan
**Sat, 3pm, Radio 4**

A spellbinding two-hander stars Simon Russell Beale as EM Forster and Tyger Drew-Honey as Syd Barrett, meeting in Forster's rooms at Cambridge in 1968. The conversation, as imagined by Haydn Middleton in his 2018 novel and dramatised for radio by Roger James Elsgood, centres on what these apparently contrasting men have in common. Barrett has just left Pink Floyd, never to return to the public eye; Forster has not published a book for 40 years. With the diffident Barrett and the wise but brittle Forster both perfectly realised, a debate about creativity gently sparkles. *Jack Seale*

### The Birth of Sparks: From Beach Boys to Blighty
**Sat, midnight, Radio 2**

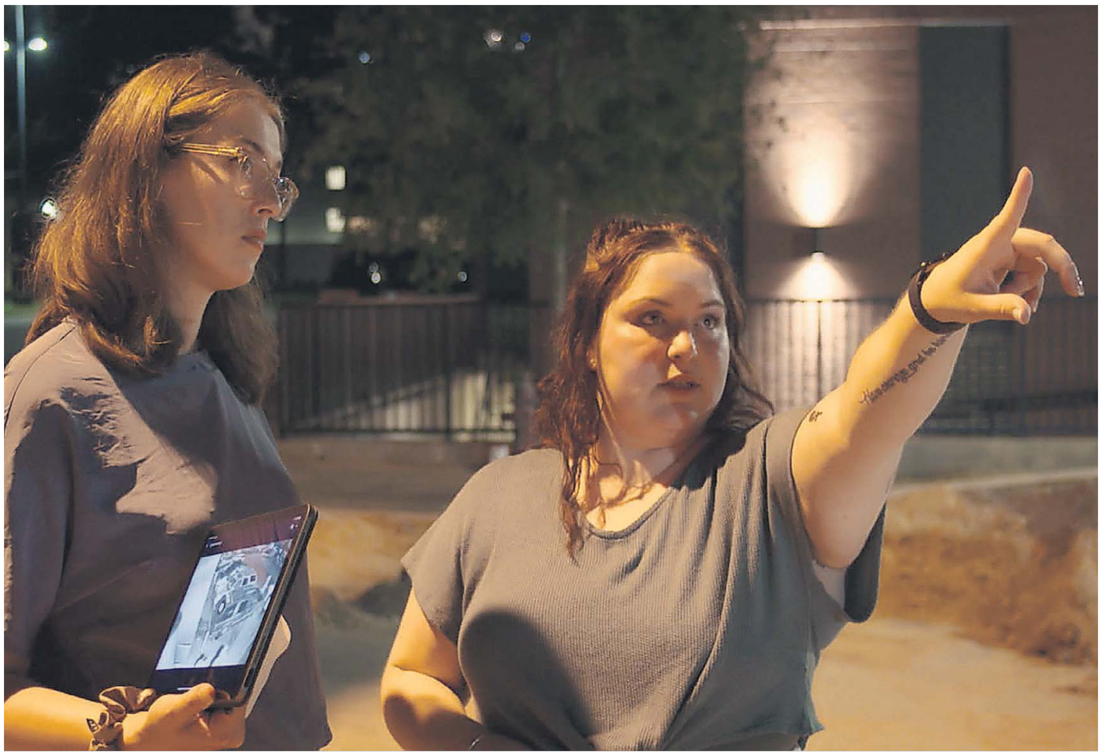
The concluding episode of a two-part documentary on the anti-Oasis: a band of two brothers who have remained cordial, creative and utterly unpredictable across six decades. Katie Puckrik presents - she's a longstanding friend of Ron and Russell Mael, who describe formative influences such as the Ronettes (pictured above), Love and the Beach Boys, how an encounter with eccentric producer Todd Rundgren landed them a big break, and the key to their constant evolution. The pair are fascinating company. *Phil Harrison*

### Drama on 3: The Women of Troy
**Sun, 7.30pm, Radio 3**

Powerful doesn't come close to describing Linda Marshall Griffiths's modern-day retelling of Euripides' anti-war drama, with Maxine Peake stunning as Queen Hecuba. Elsewhere, women are broadcasting their experiences to tell the world about oppression. With babies under threat, public figures struggling to be the perfect women society wants and the fear of female desire, there's plenty to recognise. *Hannah Verdier*

### Does the Irish Republic Want Reunification?
**Mon, 4pm, Radio 4**

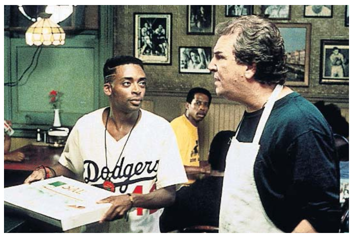
The latest polls suggest Northern Ireland would vote "no" to reunification. Marking the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday agreement, and with another referendum potentially on the horizon, Andrea Catherwood discovers it isn't a straightforward argument, in a debate that hears from representatives on both sides of the argument. *Ali Catterall*



NETFLIX

*Pick of the week*
## Victim/Suspect
**Tuesday, Netflix**

A damning indictment of US police work, Nancy Schwartzman's documentary follows journalist Rae de Leon's investigation into women who reported sexual assaults - and were then prosecuted for lying about their attacks. Her four-year search turned up 200 such cases, and it's shocking to hear and see - from police interview tapes - how vulnerable young people can find the tables turned on them. Detectives wedded to stereotypes are shown neglecting the basics of their job; they're even legally allowed to lie (they call them "ruses") to encourage victims to retract. The film focuses on the women's lives damaged as a result but De Leon's devotion to justice brings hope that times are changing. *Simon Wardell*




## Do the Right Thing

**Monday, 11.15pm, BBC Two**
Spike Lee's punchy drama starts with kids playing in the water from a fire hydrant and ends with them angrily facing off against a fire hose. Between the two deluges is a sharply observed summer's day in the life of a Brooklyn neighbourhood. The uneasy cohabitation between groups comes to the boil at a pizzeria owned by Sal (Danny Aiello) where Mookie (Lee) works while trying to keep the peace. Amid the sparks lurks a nuanced take on racial identity. *SW*

## Spring

**Monday, 10.50pm, HorrorXtra**
From those reliable purveyors of low-budget sci-fi weirdness, Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead, comes a film that starts as a sweet holiday romance and ends up an altogether queasier love story. Lou Taylor Pucci plays Evan, who flees the US for Italy after his mother dies and he beats up a guy in a bar. In a picture-postcard coastal town he falls for Louise (Nadia Hilker), a young Italian studying evolutionary genetics - and his rootlessness contrasts with her interest in antiquity. But she has an unusual skin condition, which gains significance as their affair develops in unexpected ways. *SW*



## Anna Nicole Smith: You Don't Know Me

**Out now, Netflix**
A companion piece to the recent Pamela Anderson film, though this one is far darker. There's the same troubled childhood, rise to fame via Playboy, dodgy relationships with men (in this case ageing billionaire J Howard Marshall) and precipitous fall from grace. Sadly, Smith didn't live long enough to find the redemption Anderson has, dying at 39 of an accidental drug overdose. Ursula Macfarlane's film is a fascinating cautionary tale, where success amplifies the worst parts of a personality ("Bad pays better," says one interviewee) and luck can quickly run out. *SW*



## White Men Can't Jump

**Out now, Disney+**
The 1992 comedy-drama about two street basketball hustlers gets a fun update from director Calmatic (who also recently reworked House Party), with a few tweaks to the racial politics and a more laidback approach to the pair's comic rivalry. Sinqua Walls and rapper Jack Harlow take on the Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson roles - and while they don't have the same star quality, they banter around the cliches and impress in the outdoor court scenes, as they aim for a big-money tournament that will cure their financial ills. *SW*

## Loveless

**Sunday, 1.15am, Film4**
Andrey Zvyagintsev followed the biting Leviathan with this sombre but moving tale. One snowswept autumn, a Moscow couple (Maryana Spivak and Aleksey Rozin) are preparing to separate but, with new partners already lined up, neither wants custody of their 12-year-old son. When the boy goes missing, and a volunteer search team get involved, they are forced to confront their self-centred, emotionally stunted ways. Despite being an intimate film, it's not a stretch to view the pair's empty lives as a microcosm of Russian society. *SW*





## Onoda: 10,000 Nights in the Jungle

**Thursday, 12.35am, Film4**
The true story of a Japanese second world war soldier stationed in the Philippines, who hid out on an island and didn't surrender until 1974, is a gift to fiction. Hiroo Onoda (played as a young man by Endô Yûya; older by Tsuda Kanji) is sent to Lubang to organise a guerrilla campaign. But after US forces invade he ends up camping rough with three others, refusing to believe his beloved country lost and determined to follow orders. There's plenty of comedy in Arthur Harari's film but, ultimately, it's a tragic tale of futility: a man out of time, reduced to just surviving. *SW*




## Sport

**Cycling**
**Giro d'Italia**
**Sat, 10.30am, Eurosport 1**
Stage 14, a 193km route from Sierre to Cassano Magnago.

**Challenge Cup Rugby League**
**Leeds Rhinos v Wigan Warriors**
**Sat, 2pm, BBC One**
A sixth-round game from Headingley Stadium.

**Champions Cup Rugby Union**
**Leinster v La Rochelle**
**Sat, 4pm, ITV1**
The final from Dublin.

**Premier League Football**
**Nottingham Forest v Arsenal**
**Sat, 5pm, Sky Sports Main Event**
From the City Ground.

**Women's Super League Football**
**Chelsea v Arsenal**
**Sun, 12.15pm, BBC Two**
Action from Kingsmeadow in the penultimate round of games.

**Premier League Football**
**West Ham v Leeds**
**Sun, 1pm, Sky Sports Main Event**
A must-win game for Luke Ayling (pictured above) and his relegation-threatened team. Followed by Man City v Chelsea.

**Challenge Cup Rugby League**
**Castleford Tigers v Hull FC**
**Sun, 2.35pm, BBC Two**
The sixth-round tie at the Mend-a-Hose Jungle.

**T20 Blast Cricket**
**Somerset v Hampshire Hawks**
**Wed, 7pm, Sky Sports Cricket**
From Taunton.

**Super League Rugby**
**Leeds Rhinos v St Helens**
**Fri, 7.30pm, Sky Sports Main Event**
From Headingley Stadium.

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*Annika, BBC One*

# Saturday

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **10.0** Saturday Kitchen Live (T) **11.30** Mary Berry: Love to Cook (T) (R) **12.0** Football Focus (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.10** Weather (T) **1.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **2.0** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League (T) Leeds Rhinos v Wigan Warriors (kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score (T) **5.10** Garden Rescue (T) (R) **5.40** News (T) **5.50** Regional News (T) **5.55** Weather (T) **6.0** Michael McIntyre's The Wheel (T) (R) **7.0** Blankety Blank (T) (R) **7.35** **Pointless Celebrities** (T)

**8.25** **Casualty** (T) Jodie's drink is spiked during a night out, but she is able to call for help.

**9.15** **Annika** (T) New series. On her first day in a new job, DI Annika Strandhed has to tackle the murder of a man found in the river with a harpoon in his head. Crime drama, starring Nicola Walker.

**10.10** **News** (T) Weather

**10.30** **Match of the Day** (T) Bournemouth v Man United and Nottingham Forest v Arsenal.

**11.50** **MOTD Top 10: Dark Arts** (T)

**12.20** FILM **The Mercy** (James Marsh, 2017) (T) Factual drama, starring Colin Firth. **1.55** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **2.0** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.30** **CBeebies** **6.55** CBBC **9.55** FILM Newsies: The Broadway Musical (Brett Sullivan, Jeff Calhoun, 2017) (T) **12.0** Family Cooking Showdown (T) (R) **1.0** FILM Great Expectations (David Lean, 1946) (T) **2.55** FILM The Remains of the Day (James Ivory, 1993) (T) **5.05** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** Dad's Army (T) (R) **6.35** Hidden Treasures of the National Trust (T) (R) **7.35** **Pet Shop Boys at the BBC** (T)

**9.05** **Reel Stories: Pet Shop Boys** (T) Dermot O'Leary invites Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe to join him in a London cinema and reflect on some of the pivotal moments from their career.

**9.50** **Later … With Jools Holland** (T) New series. With Hozier, Arlo Parks, Lisa O'Neill, Thee Sacred Souls and Venbee.

**10.35** **Pet Shop Boys: Live in Hyde Park** (T) (R) The duo's headline set at the Radio 2 festival in 2019, featuring performances of Always On My Mind, It's a Sin, Suburbia and West End Girls.

**12.05** **Top of the Pops: The Story of 1982** (T) (R) **1.05** FILM By the Grace of God (2018) Drama. **3.20** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **CITV** **8.25** News (T) **8.30** Oti Mabuse's Breakfast Show (T) **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning (T) **11.35** John and Lisa's Weekend Kitchen (T) **12.35** James Martin's French Adventure (T) (R) **1.10** News (T) **1.25** Racing: Live from Newbury (T) **4.0** Live Champions Cup Rugby (T) Leinster v La Rochelle (kick-off 4.45pm). **7.15** News and Weather (T) **7.20** Local News (T) **7.30** In for a Penny (T)

**8.0** **Britain's Got Talent** (T) Ant and Dec host as more performers take to the stage in London and Manchester to try to impress the judges and secure their place in the live semi-finals.

**9.20** **The 1% Club** (T) Quiz hosted by Lee Mack in which the questions are all about logic and common sense.

**10.15** **News** (T) Weather

**10.30** FILM **Fast & Furious** (Justin Lin, 2009) (T) A fugitive and an FBI agent are forced to work together once again. Thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel and Paul Walker.

**12.35** **EFL Highlights** (T) (R) **1.35** Shop: Ideal World **3.0** Unwind With ITV (T) **4.15** Love Your Weekend (T) (R)

## Channel 4

**6.10** **Everybody Loves Raymond** (T) (R) **7.25** The King of Queens (T) (R) **9.10** Frasier (T) (R) **10.40** The Simpsons (T) (R) **12.40** FILM The Spiderwick Chronicles (Mark Waters, 2008) (T) **2.25** Four in a Bed (T) (R) **5.0** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** The Lancaster Bomber at 80 With David Jason (T) (R) **7.30** Formula 1 Emilia Romagna Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights (T)

**9.0** FILM **Bad Boys for Life** (Adil El Arbi, Bilall Fallah, 2020) (T) Miami detective Mike Lowrey is targeted for assassination by a crime lord's widow. Action sequel, starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence.

**11.25** FILM **American Assassin** (Michael Cuesta, 2017) (T) Action thriller, starring Dylan O'Brien.

**1.25** **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (T) (R) **2.20** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **3.10** Jamie's Comfort Food (T) (R) **3.20** Hollyoaks Omnibus (T) (R) **5.30** Moneybags (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake!** **10.0** The Smurfs (T) **10.15** SpongeBob SquarePants (T) (R) **10.25** Entertainment News (T) **10.30** Cash in the Attic (T) (R) **11.0** Police Interceptors (T) (R) **12.0** FILM Mirror Mirror (Tarsem Singh, 2012) (T) **2.10** FILM The 'Burbs (Joe Dante, 1989) (T) **4.15** FILM The Terminal (Steven Spielberg, 2004) (T) **6.50** News (T) **6.55** The Vicar of Dibley: 30 Years of Laughs (T) (R)

**8.20** **The Royal Kitchen: Upstairs, Downstairs** (T) (R) Light-hearted glimpse at how the monarchy's culinary traditions have changed through the ages.

**9.20** **The Fab Five: The King's Grandchildren** (T) Documentary examining the lives of the royal grandchildren.

**10.45** **When TV Stars Go Horribly Wrong** (T) (R) Jennifer Ellison narrates a compilation of moments that soap stars would rather forget.

**1.30** **Teleshopping** (T) **3.30** The Yorkshire Vet (T) (R) **4.30** Britain's Biggest Mosque (T) (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.45** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Himalaya With Michael Palin** (T) (R) The intrepid traveller reaches Tibet.

**8.0** **Himalaya With Michael Palin** (T) (R) The adventurer journeys along the Yangtze river into China.

**9.0** **Afterglow** (T) New series. A mother of three planning her 40th birthday receives a phone call that turns her life upside down. Norwegian drama, starring Nina Ellen Ødegård.

**10.30** **The Mary Rose: A Timewatch Guide** (T) (R) What the latest research has revealed about the vessel and her crew.

**11.30** **Victoria Wood: The Secret List** (T) (R) Part one of two.

**12.30** **Victoria Wood: The Secret List** (T) (R) **1.30** As Time Goes By (T) (R) **2.0** Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? (T) (R) **2.30** Himalaya (T) (R)

## Other channels

### BBC Three

**7.0pm** EastEnders **8.0** Top Gear **9.0** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **9.30** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **9.55** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **10.25** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **10.55** I Kissed a Boy **12.35** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **1.35** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **2.05** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **2.30** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **3.0** Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps **3.30** Rookie Nurses

### Dave

**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.35** Driving Wars **8.30** Big Zuu's Big Eats **9.0** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **10.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **12.0** Gavin & Stacey **12.40** Gavin & Stacey **1.20** Gavin & Stacey **2.0** Gavin & Stacey **2.40** Gavin & Stacey **3.20** Gavin & Stacey **4.0** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **4.40** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **5.20** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **6.0** Red Dwarf **8.0** Not Going Out Christmas Special **9.0** Not Going Out **10.0** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **10.40** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **11.20** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **12.0** Gavin & Stacey **12.40** Gavin & Stacey **1.20** Comedy Against Living Miserably **2.15** Gavin & Stacey **3.30** The Indestructibles **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4

**6.0am** Modern Family **6.25** Lego Masters **7.25** Don't Tell the Bride **8.25** Made in Chelsea **9.30** Modern Family **11.55** The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up to Cancer **12.55** FILM The Karate Kid Part II (1986) **3.10** FILM Sonic the Hedgehog (2020) **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** The Great British Bake Off: The Winners **9.0** Celebrity Gogglebox **10.0** Gogglebox **12.10** First Dates **2.20** Celebrity Gogglebox **3.15** Gogglebox **4.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **5.0** Don't Tell the Bride

### Film4

**11.0am** FILM Barnyard (2006) **12.45** FILM Tooth Fairy (2010) **3.0** FILM Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (2014) **5.0** FILM Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows (2016) **7.10** FILM Daddy's Home (2015) **9.0** FILM Upgrade (2018) **11.0** FILM Dune (1984) **1.45** FILM The Columnist (2019)

### ITV2

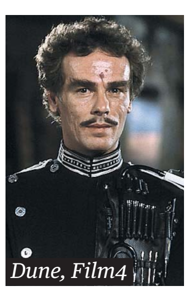
**6.0am** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **6.35** Secret Crush **7.35** Celebrity Dinner Date **8.30** Dress to Impress **9.30** Dress to Impress **10.30** Dress to Impress **11.30** Catchphrase for Soccer Aid **12.35** In for a Penny **1.05** Family Fortunes: Gino's Best Bits **1.35** Britain's Got Talent **2.55** FILM The Addams Family (2019) **4.40** FILM The Smurfs (2011) **6.45** FILM Marley & Me (2008) **9.0** FILM Bad Neighbours (2014) **10.55** Family Guy **11.25** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.25** American Dad! **12.55** All American **1.50** Hell's Kitchen **2.45** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max

**6.0am** The Flash **11.0** Fringe **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** Hawaii Five-0 **5.0** Hawaii Five-0 **6.0** Hawaii Five-0 **7.0** Fast & Furious: Greatest Moments Refuelled **8.0** Flintoff: Lord of the Fries **9.0** A League of Their Own: European Road Trip **10.0** Last King of the Cross **10.55** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **11.40** Bel-Air **12.35** Resident Alien **1.30** Road Wars **2.0** S.W.A.T **3.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **3.30** Highway Patrol **4.0** The Flash **5.0** Stop, Search, Seize

### Sky Arts

**6.0am** Beethoven's Fidelio By Christoph Waltz **8.25** Tales of the Unexpected **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.30** Tales of the Unexpected **11.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **12.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **12.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **1.0** Classic Albums **2.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **3.0** Sting: Live in Berlin **5.0** Guy Garvey: From the Vaults **7.0** Mick Fleetwood and Friends Celebrate the Music of Peter Green **9.55** Fleetwood Mac: Live in Boston **11.0** Fleetwood Mac: Live in Boston **12.15** Billy Joel in Black & White **1.15** Jefferson Starship Live **2.40** Genesis: The Last Domino? **4.0** Isle of Wight Festival Greatest Hits **4.30** Isle of Wight Festival Greatest Hits **5.0** Discovering: The Beach Boys **5.30** Discovering: The Monkees



*Dune, Film4*

### Sky Atlantic

**6.0am** Urban Secrets **9.0** The Wire **2.25** True Blood **7.50** Game of Thrones **9.0** Game of Thrones **10.05** Game of Thrones **11.10** Game of Thrones **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** Catherine the Great **2.30** Treme **3.40** In Treatment **4.10** Urban Secrets

## Radio

### Radio 3

**7.0am** Breakfast. With Martin Handley. **9.0** Record Review. Flora Willson chooses her favourite recording of Mahler's Rückert-Lieder. **11.45** Music Matters. The poet Simon Armitage talks about the art of lyric writing. **12.30** This Classical Life. Jess Gillam chats to pianist and composer Missy Mazzoli. **1.0** Inside Music. With violinist Tessa Lark. (R) **3.0** Sound of Cinema. Matthew Sweet focuses on music from recent South Korean films. **4.0** Music Planet. With a session by bagpipe player Brighde Chaimbeul. **5.0** J to Z. A special edition for Mental Health Awareness Month. **6.30** Opera on 3. From the Royal Opera House, London, the UK premiere of Kaija Saariaho's Innocence, with Jenny Carlstedt, Sandrine Piau and Christopher Purves, conducted by Susanna Mälkki. **8.25** In Concert. The UK premiere of Kaija Saariaho's Reconnaissance (Rusty Mirror Madrigal), plus Nuits (adieux), Tag des Jahrs and Terra memoria, featuring the BBC Singers, Beth Higham-Edwards (percussion), Dominic Worsley (double bass), Sound Intermedia, conducted by Krista Audere, and the Fibonacci Quartet. **10.0** New Music Show. With a performance of Helmut Lachenmann's String Quartet No 2. **12.0** Freeness **1.0** Through the Night

### Radio 4

**6.0am** News and Papers **6.07** Ramblings (R) **6.30** Farming Today This Week **6.57** Weather **7.0** Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** Saturday Live **10.0** Your Place Or Mine. Krishnan Guru-Murthy makes the case for Australia's Mornington Peninsula. (7/13) **10.30** The Kitchen Cabinet. Jay Rayner presents the culinary panel show. (5/6) **11.0** The Week in Westminster **11.30** From Our Own Correspondent **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Money Box **12.30** The News Quiz (R) **12.57** Weather **1.0** News **1.10** Any Questions? (R) **2.0** Any Answers? Listeners have their say. **2.45** The Museums That Make Us. Neil MacGregor visits the Tower Museum in Derry. (R) **3.0** **The Ballad of Syd & Morgan** Roger James Elsgood's dramatisation of Haydn Middleton's novel imagining EM Forster meeting Syd Barrett. With Simon Russell Beale and Tyger Drew-Honey. **4.0** Weekend Woman's Hour **5.0** Saturday PM. With Caroline Wyatt. **5.30** Political Thinking With Nick Robinson **5.54** Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.15** Loose Ends. Clive Anderson and David Morrissey are joined by Stacey Dooley and Gabrielle Brooks. With music from Ron Sexsmith and Galen & Paul. **7.0** Profile **7.15** This Cultural Life. Nick Cave reveals his formative influences and experiences. (8/12) **8.0** Archive on 4: The Socrates of San Francisco. The story of reluctant advertising innovator Howard Luck Gossage. **9.0** GF Newman's The Corrupted (R) **9.45** Short Works. The Suit, by Colin Carberry. (R) **10.0** News **10.15** Bringing Up Britain (R) **11.0** Round Britain Quiz (R) **11.30** Uncanny. A look at the Rendlesham UFO, the most famous and controversial case in British UFO history. (7/12) **12.0** Midnight News **12.15** 21st-Century Relaxation Tape (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Bells on Sunday **5.45** Profile (R)

### Radio 4 Extra

**6.0am** Lord Dracula **7.30** The Wall Omnibus (1-5/5) **8.45** The Fosdyke Saga (3/13) **9.0** Benny Hill Time **9.30** Whack-O! **10.0** Writing: The Midlands (3/3) **11.0** Lord Dracula **12.30** The Wall Omnibus (1-5/5) **1.45** The Fosdyke Saga (3/13) **2.0** Benny Hill Time **2.30** Whack-O! **3.0** Writing: The Midlands (3/3) **4.0** Dangerous Visions: Body Tourists **4.45** Someone Like You (3/5) **5.0** Lord Dracula **6.30** The Wall Omnibus (1-5/5) **7.45** The Fosdyke Saga (3/13) **8.0** Benny Hill Time **8.30** Whack-O! **9.0** Writing: The Midlands (3/3) **10.0** Nick Mohammed in Bits (4/4) **10.30** Mark Watson Makes the World Substantially Better (5/6) **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.0** Vent (3/6) **11.30** Life: An Idiot's Guide (3/6) **12.0** To See the Sun **12.30** The Golden Apples of the Sun (3/4) **1.0** Lord Dracula **2.30** The Wall Omnibus (1-5/5) **3.45** The Fosdyke Saga (3/13) **4.0** Benny Hill Time **4.30** Whack-O! **5.0** Writing: The Midlands (3/3)

# Sunday



*Depp v Heard, Channel 4*

## BBC One

**6.0 Breakfast** (T) **7.35** Match of the Day (T) (R) **9.0** Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg (T) **10.0** Politics England (T) **10.30** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **11.0** Great Manchester Run (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.10** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **1.15** Songs of Praise (T) **1.50** Points of View (T) **2.05** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **2.50** FILM The Railway Children (1970) (T) **4.35** Primates (T) (R) **5.35** News (T) **5.50** Regional News and Weather (T) **6.0** Countdown to RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2023 (T) **7.0** Countryfile (T)

**8.0 Antiques Roadshow** (T) Fiona Bruce presents the show from the grounds of Belmont House in Kent.

**9.0 Ten Pound Poms** (T) A haunted Terry retraces his steps from the night before. Kate gets a lead on Michael's whereabouts, and Bill goes to extreme lengths to get himself a bit of extra cash.

**10.0 News** (T)
**10.25 Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.30 Match of the Day 2** (T) Man City v Chelsea, Brighton v Southampton and West Ham v Leeds.
**11.40 The Women's Football Show** (T) Chelsea v Arsenal and Man United v Man City.
**12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead** (T) **12.30** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.30 A to Z of TV Gardening** (T) (R) **6.50** Gardeners' World (T) (R) **7.50** Countryfile (T) (R) **8.45** Beechgrove Garden (T) (R) **9.15** Landward (T) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites (T) **11.15** Family Cooking Showdown (T) (R) **12.15** MOTD Live: Women's Super League (T) Chelsea v Arsenal (Kick-off 12.30pm). **2.35** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League (T) Castleford Tigers v Hull FC (Kick-off 3pm). **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.15** Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy (T) (R) **7.0** Inside the Factory (T) (R)

**8.0 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby** (T) (R) Giles Coren and Monica Galetti travel to Copenhagen to work at Nimb Hotel in Tivoli Gardens.

**9.0 Simon Reeve's South America** (T) (R) The journalist travels through the Andes mountains from Peru to Bolivia, beginning at the ruins of Machu Picchu.

**10.0** FILM **Supernova** (Harry Macqueen, 2020) (T) Romantic drama, starring Colin Firth and Stanley Tucci.
**11.30 Miriam Margolyes: Almost Australian** (T) (R)
**12.30 Colin from Accounts** (T) (R) **1.0** Sign Zone: Question Time (T) (R) **2.0** Steeltown Murders (T) (R) **3.0** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0 CITV 8.25** News (T) **8.30** Laura Whitmore's Breakfast Show (T) **9.25** Love Your Weekend With Alan Titchmarsh (T) **11.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning (T) (R) **1.40** News (T) **2.0** Goodwoof (T) **4.0** FILM Thunderball (Terence Young, 1965) (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **6.45** Local News and Weather (T) **7.0** Family Fortunes (T)

**8.0 The Chase Celebrity Special** (T) With Danny John-Jules, Yinka Bokinni, Tom Bosworth and Eamonn Holmes.

**9.0 Malpractice** (T) Lucinda's search for the truth becomes dangerous and she needs help from George and Norma, who must decide whether they can trust her. Last in the series.

**10.05 News** (T) Weather
**10.20 Ithaka: The Fight to Free Assange** (T) The story of the campaign by Julian Assange's wife and father to prevent his extradition to the US.
**12.20 Shop: Ideal World 3.0** Motorsport UK (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Ainsley's Food We Love (T) (R)

## Channel 4

**6.20 Cheers** (T) (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.05** The King of Queens (T) (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch (T) **12.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **2.50** FILM School of Rock (Richard Linklater, 2003) (T) **5.0** Billionaire Blooms (T) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Formula 1 Emilia Romagna Highlights (T)

**9.0 Depp v Heard** (T) New series. Documentary exploring the tumultuous defamation trial between actor Johnny Depp and his former wife Amber Heard - the first in US history to be fully broadcast live.

**10.0 Gogglebox** (T) (R)
**10.55 Walter Presents: Mobile 101** (T) Drama based on the story of electronics firm Nokia.
**12.05** FILM **Second Act** (2018) (T) Romantic comedy. **1.50** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **2.40** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **4.50** Jamie's One-Pan Wonders (T) (R) **5.15** Moneybags (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0 Milkshake! 10.0** The Smurfs (T) **10.10** SpongeBob SquarePants (T) (R) **10.25** Entertainment News (T) **10.35** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) (R) **1.40** Yorkshire: Springtime in the Wild (T) (R) **2.40** Cruising the Med With Susan Calman (T) **4.30** Adele: 30 Greatest Moments (T) (R) **6.25** News (T) **6.30** Britain's Favourite Toys Ever! (T)

**8.0 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park** (T) New series. Documentary about life at caravan parks and campsites across south-west England.

**9.0 Rich House, Poor House** (T) New series. A single mum from Essex who survives on less than £60 a week swaps lives with a multimillionaire businessman.

**10.0 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun** (T) (R)
**10.55 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments** (T) (R)
**1.0 Teleshopping** (T) **3.0** The Yorkshire Vet (T) (R) **3.55** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (T) (R) **4.40** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.30** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0 John Williams at the BBC** (T) (R) Archive performances by the classical guitarist.

**8.0 BBC's Earth Prom With Chris Packham** (T) (R) Ben Palmer conducts the BBC SSO in music from BBC natural history documentaries, including music by Hans Zimmer and George Fenton.

**9.55 Hans Zimmer: Hollywood Rebel** (T) (R) Profile of the Oscar-winning composer of film and TV scores.

**10.55 Imagine: Tracey Emin – Where Do You Draw the Line?** (T) (R) Alan Yentob follows the artist over the course of 12 months to chart her creative process, talking about her life to date.
**12.10 Simon Schama Meets Ai Weiwei** (T) (R) **12.40** Berlin 1945 (T) (R) **1.35** BBC's Earth Prom With Chris Packham (T)

## Other channels

### BBC Three

**7.0pm** EastEnders **7.30** EastEnders **8.0** Meet the Khans Relationship Quiz **8.05** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **8.30** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **9.0** I Kissed a Boy **9.45** FILM Weird Science (1985) **11.15** Search Party **11.45** Search Party **12.15** I Kissed a Boy **1.0** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **2.0** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **2.25** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **2.50** Hot Property **3.20** Rookie Nurses

### Dave

**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.0** The Indestructibles **7.35** Driving Wars **8.30** Big Zuu's Big Eats **9.0** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **10.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **12.0** Gavin & Stacey **12.40** Gavin & Stacey **1.20** Gavin & Stacey **2.0** Gavin & Stacey **2.40** Gavin & Stacey **3.20** Gavin & Stacey **4.0** Gavin & Stacey **4.40** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **5.20** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **6.0** Red Dwarf **6.40** Red Dwarf **7.20** Red Dwarf **8.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **9.0** Alan Davies: As Yet Untitled **10.0** Meet the Richardsons **10.40** Gavin & Stacey **12.0** Red Dwarf **12.40** Red Dwarf **1.20** Red Dwarf **2.0** Comedy Against Living Miserably **2 3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4

**6.0am** Hollyoaks Omnibus **8.25** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.25** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **10.25** The Big Bang Theory **10.55** The Big Bang Theory **11.25** The Big Bang Theory **11.55** The Big Bang Theory **12.30** The Big Bang Theory **12.55** FILM The Karate Kid Part III (1989) **3.05** The Big Bang Theory **3.40** The Big Bang Theory **4.10** The Big Bang Theory **4.40** The Big Bang Theory **5.10** The Big Bang Theory **5.40** The Big Bang Theory **6.10** The Big Bang Theory **6.40** The Big Bang Theory **7.05** FILM Crocodile Dundee (1986) **9.0** FILM Hancock (2008) **10.50** Naked Attraction **11.55** Gogglebox **1.0** Gogglebox **2.05** Gogglebox **3.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **3.50** Hollyoaks Omnibus

### Film4

**11.0am** FILM Tad the Lost Explorer and the Secret of King Midas (2017) **12.40** FILM The Perfect Catch (2005) **2.50** FILM Kung Fu Panda 2 (2011) **4.40** FILM The Devil Wears Prada (2006) **6.55** FILM Daddy's Home 2 (2017) **9.0** FILM The Sum of All Fears (2002) **11.20** FILM Another 48 Hrs (1990) **1.15** FILM Loveless (2017)

### ITV2

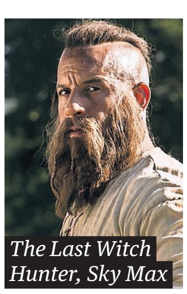
**6.0am** Unwind With ITV **6.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **6.45** Secret Crush **7.45** Secret Crush **8.45** Secret Crush **9.45** Dress to Impress **10.45** Dress to Impress **11.45** Family Fortunes **12.50** In for a Penny **1.20** Britain's Got Talent **2.35** I'm a Celebrity South Africa Unseen **3.35** FILM The Smurfs 2 (2013) **5.40** FILM Shanghai Knights (2003) **8.0** FILM Pitch Perfect 2 (2015) **10.15** Family Guy **10.45** Family Guy **11.15** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.10** American Dad! **12.35** All American **1.35** Hell's Kitchen **2.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max

**6.0am** Highway Patrol **6.30** Highway Patrol **7.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **8.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **9.0** Supergirl **10.0** Supergirl **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **12.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** NCIS: New Orleans **2.0** NCIS: New Orleans **3.0** Fringe **4.0** Fringe **5.0** Fringe **6.0** Fringe **7.0** FILM The Last Witch Hunter (2015) **9.0** S.W.A.T **10.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **11.0** Fantasy Island **12.0** The Force: North East **1.0** The Force: North East **2.0** Road Wars **3.0** Road Wars **4.0** Stop, Search, Seize

### Sky Arts

**6.0am** Pavarotti: 10th Anniversary Gala **7.15** Queen & Béjart: Ballet for Life **8.30** Tales of the Unexpected **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.30** Tales of the Unexpected **11.0** Portrait Artist of the Year: The Exhibition **12.0** The Art of the Garden **12.55** Jack B Yeats: The Man Who Painted Ireland **2.0** Cirque Du Soleil: Amaluna **3.10** André Rieu: Live in Vienna **6.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **7.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **8.0** Live from the Artists Den **9.0** Peter O'Toole: Along the Sky Road to Aqaba **11.0** Women Who Rock **12.15** Alanis Morissette: Live in Concert **1.30** Chrissie Hynde Sings Bob Dylan: Tomorrow Is a Long Time **3.10** Pretenders: Music Icons **3.40** Video Killed the Radio Star **4.05** The Ronnie Wood Show **4.40** The Ronnie Wood Show **5.10** Discovering: Peter Gabriel **5.35** Discovering: The Mamas & the Papas



*The Last Witch Hunter, Sky Max*

### Sky Atlantic

**6.0am** Urban Secrets **8.0** The Wire **2.25** True Blood **7.50** Catherine the Great **9.0** Succession **10.10** Perry Mason **11.15** Patrick Melrose **12.30** Der Pass **1.30** In Treatment **2.0** Succession **3.25** Sharp Objects **4.30** In Treatment **5.0** Fish Town

## Radio

### Radio 3

**7.0am** Breakfast **9.0** Sunday Morning **12.0** Private Passions. Michael Berkeley is joined by artist Norman Ackroyd. **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Violinist Alina Ibragimova and pianist Cédric Tiberghien perform Schumann's first two violin sonatas. (R) **2.0** The Early Music Show. Lucie Skeaping visits the Handel & Hendrix in London museum. **3.0** Choral Evensong (R) **4.0** Jazz Record Requests **5.0** The Listening Service (R) **5.30** Words and Music **6.45** Sunday Feature: Clocks and Clouds - An Adventure Around György Ligeti. A portrait of the Hungarian composer. (R) **7.30** Drama on 3: The Women of Troy Linda Marshall Griffiths's adaptation of Euripides' tragedy, starring Maxine Peake. **8.50** Record Review Extra **11.0** The Story of the Little Book. Emma Jenkins reflects on contemporary opera. (3/3) **12.0** Classical Fix. With broadcaster Kate Silverton. **12.30** Through the Night

### Radio 4

**6.0am** News **6.05** Something Understood. Poet Pejk Malinovski reflects on various senses of self. (R) **6.35** On Your Farm. Crofters in Scotland's Western Isles planning to create a thriving business. (6/8) **6.57** Weather **7.0** News **7.10** Sunday Papers **7.10** Sunday **7.54** Radio 4 Appeal **7.57** Weather **8.0** News **8.0** Sunday Papers **8.10** Sunday Worship **8.48** A Point of View (R) **8.58** Tweet of the Day (R) **9.0** Broadcasting House **10.0** The Archers (R) **11.15** Desert Island Discs. With Ian McKellen. (3/14) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Just a Minute (R) **12.30** The Food Programme. Dan Saladino meets a group of people living like hunter-gatherers. **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World This Weekend **1.30** Conspiracies. Enoch Powell's personal crusade against the "enemy within". (2/3) **2.0** Gardeners' Question Time (R) **2.45** Opening Lines. John Yorke explores EM Forster's 1908 novel A Room With a View. **3.0** Love Stories: A Room With a View. Marcy Kahan's dramatisation of the novel. (1/2) **4.0** Open Book **4.30** Whose Truth Is It Anyway? Damian Barr explores reality, truth and fiction in literature. (1/3) **5.0** File on 4 (R) **5.40** Profile (R) **5.54** Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.15** Pick of the Week **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Mark Steel's in Town (R) **7.45** On Portobello Prom. By Sara Sheridan. (3/5) **8.0** Feedback (R) **8.30** Last Word (R) **9.0** Money Box (R) **9.25** Radio 4 Appeal (R) **9.30** Short Cuts: Unfinished (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The Westminster Hour **11.0** Loose Ends (R) **11.30** Something Understood (R) **12.0** News **12.15** Thinking Allowed (R) **12.45** Bells on Sunday (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

### Radio 4 Extra

**6.0am** Poetry Extra: Body of Work - Borders Met and Crossed **6.30** Hello World: How to Be Human in the Age of the Machine Omnibus (1-5/5) **7.40** Inheritance Tracks **7.50** Young Victoria Omnibus (6-10/10) **9.0** Instant Sunshine **9.30** The Navy Lark **10.0** Desert Island Discs Revisited **10.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **11.0** Poetry Extra **11.30** Hello World Omnibus (1-5/5) **12.40** Inheritance Tracks **12.50** Young Victoria Omnibus (6-10/10) **2.0** Instant Sunshine **2.30** The Navy Lark **3.0** Desert Island Discs Revisited **3.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **4.0** To See the Sun **4.30** The Golden Apples of the Sun (3/4) **5.0** Poetry Extra **5.30** Hello World Omnibus (1-5/5) **6.40** Inheritance Tracks **6.50** Young Victoria Omnibus (6-10/10) **8.0** Instant Sunshine **8.30** The Navy Lark **9.0** Desert Island Discs Revisited **9.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **10.0** Start/Stop (6/6) **10.30** Isy Suttie's Love Letters (1/4) **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.0** Andy Hamilton Sort of Remembers (3/4) **11.30** Brian Appleton's History of Rock'n'Roll (3/6) **11.45** Self Storage (3/6) **12.0** Poetry Extra **12.30** Hello World Omnibus (1-5/5) **1.40** Inheritance Tracks **1.50** Young Victoria Omnibus (6-10/10) **3.0** Instant Sunshine **3.30** The Navy Lark **4.0** Desert Island Discs Revisited **4.45** David Attenborough's Life Stories **5.0** The Prisoner (1/4)



*My Name Is Reeva, Channel 4*

# Monday

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Rip Off Britain (T) **10.0** Frontline Fightback (T) **10.45** Defenders UK (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) **3.45** RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2023 (T) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

**8.0** **Panorama: Landfill – Britain's Toxic Secrets** (T) Amber Haque investigates a Staffordshire landfill site.
**8.30** **Scam Interceptors** (T) (R) Presented by Rav Wilding.
**9.0** **Steeltown Murders** (T) With the swabbing operation set in motion, Paul corners Sandra Newton's stepfather, who doesn't have an alibi.

**10.0** **News** (T)
**10.30** **Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.40** **Have I Got a Bit More News for You** (T) Mel Giedroyc hosts an extended episode of the satirical quiz.
**11.25** **Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star** (T) (R) The MUAs work in pairs to create special effects makeup.
**12.25** **Weather** (T) **12.30** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.45** **Italian Road Trip** (T) **7.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **8.0** Sign Zone: Rick Stein's Cornwall (T) **8.30** Designing the Hebrides (T) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **11.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Food Map of Britain (T) **2.45** A Countryside Summer (T) **3.15** Eat Well for Less? (T) **4.15** Interior Design Masters (T) **5.15** Flog It! (T) **6.0** House of Games (T) (R) **6.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) **7.0** Grand Tours of Scotland's Rivers (T) **7.30** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T)

**8.30** **University Challenge** (T) The second and concluding semi-final.
**9.0** **Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland** (T) New series. Stories of the Troubles from people on all sides of the conflict, beginning by looking at how the situation in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s deteriorated.

**10.15** **QI XS** (T) Highlights show.
**10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather
**11.15** FILM **Do the Right Thing** (Spike Lee, 1989) (T) Drama, starring Spike Lee, Danny Aiello and John Turturro.
**1.10** **Sign Zone** Countryfile (T) (R) **2.05** Wrexham: Hollywood Or Bust! (T) (R) **2.35** Turkey: Empire of Erdogan (T) (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

**8.0** **Coronation Street** (T) Brian introduces Isabella to his neighbours, and Hope sabotages Sam's surprise for Eliza.
**9.0** **Maryland** (T) New series. Drama about two sisters who have grown apart, until a tragic event brings them back together. Starring Suranne Jones and Eve Best.

**10.0** **News** (T) Weather
**10.30** **Local News** (T) Weather
**10.45** **The 1% Club** (T) (R)
**11.40** **All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite** (T) Fight action.
**1.20** **Shop: Ideal World** **3.0** Maryland (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Save Money: Good Diet (T) (R) **5.35** James Martin's French Adventure (T) (R)

## Channel 4

**6.05** **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **10.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **4.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.0** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

**8.0** **Sarah Beeny's New Life in the Country** (T) Graham and Sarah turn their attention to the garden.
**9.0** **Rescue: Extreme Medics** (T) The air ambulance is dispatched to two serious road traffic collisions, while on the west bank of Loch Lomond, a minibus carrying 15 tourists has hit a car.

**10.0** **Depp v Heard** (T)
**11.05** **My Name Is Reeva** (T)
**12.05** **Taskmaster** (T) (R) **1.05** 999: On the Front Line (T) (R) **2.0** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **2.45** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Vilnius (T) (R) **3.15** Grand Designs (T) (R) **4.10** The Dog House (T) (R) **5.0** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **5.15** Moneybags (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake!** **9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.15** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Mystery 101: Dead Talk (Winnifred Jong, 2019) (T) **4.0** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Eggheads (T) (R) **7.0** Traffic Cops (T) (R)

**8.0** **Police Interceptors** (T) Units mobilise to stop a 185mph superbike and the last resort is for tactical contact.
**9.0** **Police: Suspect No 1** (T) Detectives investigate when a man is found badly beaten at the side of the road with significant facial injuries and little recollection of what happened.

**10.0** **Ambulance: Code Red** (T) (R)
**11.05** **999: Critical Condition** (T)
**12.05** **Police Interceptors** (T) (R) **1.0** Teleshopping (T) **3.0** Walking Britain's Lost Railways (T) (R) **3.45** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (T) (R) **4.35** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.0** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.25** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Railways: The Making of a Nation** (T) (R) A look back at excursion trains, which became popular in the 1840s. **7.30** Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam (T) (R) The development of the steamship.

**8.0** **Italy's Invisible Cities** (T) (R) Alexander Armstrong and Michael Scott explore Venice using 3D technology.
**9.0** **Saving Venice** (T) (R) Documentary exploring how the Italian city is subject to constant environmental issues, which are becoming more commonplace due to climate change.

**10.30** **The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway** (T) (R) Documentary about the Elizabeth line.
**11.30** **Building Britain's Biggest Nuclear Power Station** (T) (R) Part two of two.
**12.30** **H2O** (T) (R) **1.25** Novels That Shaped Our World (T) (R) **2.25** Railways: The Making of a Nation (T) (R) **2.55** Himalaya (T) (R)

# Other channels

### BBC Three

**7.0pm** Top Gear **8.0** The Agency: Unfiltered **8.30** The Agency: Unfiltered **9.0** I Kissed a Boy **9.45** FILM Moonlight (2016) **11.30** Fleabag **11.55** Fleabag **12.25** I Kissed a Boy **1.10** The Agency: Unfiltered **1.40** The Agency: Unfiltered **2.10** Fleabag **2.35** Fleabag **3.05** Hot Property **3.35** Ellie & Natasia

### Dave

**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.10** Driving Wars **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Cops on the Rock **10.0** Storage Hunters UK **10.30** Storage Hunters UK **11.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **12.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **1.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Secrets of the Supercars **5.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Room 101 **9.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **10.0** QI XL **11.0** Live at the Apollo **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** QI **1.20** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4

**6.0am** Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Neighborhood **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **10.30** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **9.0** The Big Celebrity Detox **10.0** Made in Chelsea **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Naked Attraction **1.15** The Big Celebrity Detox **2.20** Made in Chelsea **3.15** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **4.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.55** The Neighborhood

### Film4

**11.0am** FILM Hatari! (1962) **2.10** FILM Comanche Station (1960) **3.45** FILM Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970) **6.35** FILM Star Trek (2009) **9.0** FILM Independence Day (1996) Sci-fi adventure, starring Will Smith. **11.50** FILM The Craft (1996) Horror, starring Robin Tunney. **1.55** FILM Book Club (2018)

### ITV2

**6.0am** World's Funniest Videos **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** One Tree Hill **9.0** Dawson's Creek **10.0** Secret Crush **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Superstore **7.30** Superstore **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** Family Guy **9.30** Family Guy **10.0** FILM Plebs: Soldiers of Rome (2022) **11.50** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.10** Bob's Burgers **1.40** Bob's Burgers **2.05** Superstore **2.35** Superstore **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max

**6.0am** Stargate SG-1 **7.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Quantum Leap **10.0** The Flash **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **12.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** MacGyver **3.0** Quantum Leap **4.0** Supergirl **5.0** The Flash **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **7.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **9.0** Last King of the Cross **10.0** Bel-Air **11.0** Rob & Romesh vs Team GB: Part 1 **12.0** The Force: North East **1.0** Road Wars **2.0** The Flash **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** MacGyver **5.0** Highway Patrol

### Sky Arts

**6.0am** King Arthur **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Rock Hudson **12.0** Doddie Weir Portrait **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Reinventing the Orchestra With Charles Hazlewood **3.0** The Directors **4.0** Discovering: Groucho Marx **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** André Rieu: Live in Brazil **9.0** Discovering Dance on Film **10.30** FILM The Lost Leonardo (2021) **12.30** The Great Buster **2.35** Why Do We Dance? **3.50** Arts Uncovered **4.0** The South Bank Show **5.0** Auction **5.30** Auction



*Moonlight, BBC Three*

### Sky Atlantic

**6.0am** Fish Town **7.0** Fish Town **7.55** The Wire **9.0** The Wire **10.05** True Blood **11.10** True Blood **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** Ray Donovan **2.25** Ray Donovan **3.30** The Wire **4.35** The Wire **5.45** True Blood **6.50** True Blood **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** **Succession** **10.25** Billions **11.30** Billions **12.35** Souls **1.35** Souls **2.35** Game of Thrones **3.40** In Treatment **4.10** Fish Town **5.05** Fish Town

# Radio

### Radio 3

**6.30am** Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Ligeti (1/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Live from London's Wigmore Hall, the Sitkovetsky Trio perform Sam Perkin's Freakshow, Beethoven's Allegretto in B flat and Mendelssohn's Piano Trio No 2 in C minor, Op 66. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. A week of music from Denmark and Sweden, with the Danish National SO in Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. **4.30** New Generation Artists. Cellist Anastasia Kobekina plays Bach's Suite No 3 in C. **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Philippe Herreweghe conducts the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Collegium Vocale Ghent, sopranos Katharina Konradi and Eva Zaïcik, tenor Ilker Arcayürek and bass Mikhail Timoshenko in Mozart's Symphony No 41 in C, K551, and Mass in C minor, K427. **9.0** Ultimate Calm (7/12) **10.0** Music Matters (R) **10.45** The Essay: Death in Trieste. Sean Williams on the 1768 murder of art historian Johann Winckelmann. (1/5) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

### Radio 4

**6.0am** Today **9.0** Start the Week. A discussion on birds and moths. **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: The West. By Naoíse Mac Sweeney. (1/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Blood on the Dance Floor. The peace talks happening behind the scenes are put to the test by the murder. (5/6) **11.30** Lady Killers With Lucy Worsley. Prof Ros Crone and Sikisa Bostwick-Barnes discuss the cases. (10/10) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Taking Issue With Shakespeare. Gordon Brown on the bard and populism. (1/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** This Cultural Life (R) **3.0** Round Britain Quiz (7/12) **3.30** The Food Programme (R) **4.0** **Does the Irish Republic Want Reunification?** Andrea Catherwood investigates the prospect of reunification in Ireland. **4.30** The Digital Human. Aleks Krotoski explores the rise of a new form of social media language. (1/6) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Just a Minute (8/8) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** Faith on the Factory Floor, Flock in a Hard Hat. The role of the British industrial mission in a changing world. **8.30** Crossing Continents (R) **9.0** Supersenses (R) **9.30** Start the Week (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Making of Another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece. By Tom Hanks. (6/10) **11.0** The Patch (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News **12.30** Book of the Week: The West (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

### Radio 4 Extra

**6.0am** Shadows in Bronze (4/6) **6.30** The Wolf Far Hence (1/6) **7.0** In My Mind's Eye (1/5) **7.15** Dead Cert (1/5) **7.30** Alexei Sayle's Imaginary Sandwich Bar (2/4) **8.0** Round the Horne (12/16) **8.30** Dry Slopes (4/4) **9.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **9.30** Double Income, No Kids Yet (5/6) **10.0** The Prisoner (1/4) **11.0** Shadows in Bronze (4/6) **11.30** The Wolf Far Hence (1/6) **12.0** In My Mind's Eye (1/5) **12.15** Dead Cert (1/5) **12.30** Alexei Sayle's Imaginary Sandwich Bar (2/4) **1.0** Round the Horne (12/16) **1.30** Dry Slopes (4/4) **2.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **2.30** Double Income, No Kids Yet (5/6) **3.0** The Prisoner (1/4) **4.0** Shadows in Bronze (4/6) **4.30** The Wolf Far Hence (1/6) **5.0** In My Mind's Eye (1/5) **5.15** Dead Cert (1/5) **5.30** Alexei Sayle's Imaginary Sandwich Bar (2/4) **6.0** Round the Horne (12/16) **6.30** Dry Slopes (4/4) **7.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **7.30** Double Income, No Kids Yet (5/6) **8.0** Joan Collins: A Life in Lipstick (1/2) **9.0** Mastertapes (5/10) **9.30** Ruth Rendell Stories **9.45** The Shadow Over Innsmouth (11/15) **10.0** Just a Minute (7/8) **10.30** And Now in Colour (3/6) **11.0** The News Quiz (4/7) **11.30** The Skivers (2/5) **12.0** The Prisoner (1/4) **1.0** Shadows in Bronze (4/6) **1.30** The Wolf Far Hence (1/6) **2.0** In My Mind's Eye (1/5) **2.15** Dead Cert (1/5) **2.30** Alexei Sayle's Imaginary Sandwich Bar (2/4) **3.0** Round the Horne (12/16) **3.30** Dry Slopes (4/4) **4.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **4.30** Double Income, No Kids Yet (5/6) **5.0** The Prisoner (2/4)

# Tuesday


*Love Your Garden, ITV1*

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Rip Off Britain (T) **10.0** Frontline Fightback (T) **10.45** Defenders UK (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) **3.45** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

**8.0** **Waterloo Road** (T) Kelly Jo makes a shocking revelation, causing problems for Nicky and her family, and Amy finds herself infatuated with a colleague.
**9.0** **MasterChef** (T) The semi-finalists cook a feast for the trainers and first responders at Gloucestershire's Fire Service College.

**10.0** **News** (T)
**10.30** **Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.40** **Rain Dogs** (T) Selby, Gloria and Lenny go on a road trip in search of Costello after a call from Iris. Last in the series.
**11.05** **Matt Willis: Fighting Addiction** (T) (R)
**12.05** **Question of Sport** (T) (R) **12.35** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **12.40** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.30** **Bargain Hunt** (T) (R) **7.15** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Coast to Coast Food Festival (T) (R) **8.30** Coastal Defenders (T) (R) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **11.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Food Map of Britain (T) (R) **2.45** A Countryside Summer (T) (R) **3.15** Japan: Earth's Enchanted Islands (T) (R) **4.15** Interior Design Masters (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** House of Games (T) (R) **6.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) **7.0** Digging for Britain (T) (R)

**8.0** **RHS Chelsea Flower Show** (T) The BBC gardening team present highlights of this year's gardens.
**9.0** **Forensics: The Real CSI** (T) When an armed gang robs £300,000 worth of gold from a Birmingham jewellery store, police need to use forensic evidence to track down the gold.

**10.0** **Colin from Accounts** (T) Ashley invites her party-loving friends to Echo Parks.
**10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather
**11.15** FILM **Vice** (2018) (T) Comic biopic of Dick Cheney, starring Christian Bale.
**1.20** **Sign Zone** Murder in the Pacific (T) (R) **2.05** MasterChef (T) (R) **4.05** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

**8.0** **Love Your Garden** (T) In Enfield, the team transform a garden for Yvonne, a woman who has devoted her life to combating knife crime after the death of her son.
**9.0** **Maryland** (T) Becca and Rosaline struggle to come to terms with the shocking revelations about their mother's past.

**10.0** **News** (T) Weather
**10.30** **Local News** (T) Weather
**10.45** FILM **Fast & Furious 5** (Justin Lin, 2011) (T) Action adventure sequel, starring Vin Diesel and Dwayne Johnson.
**12.55** **Shop: Ideal World 3.0** Maryland (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Bling (T) (R)

## Channel 4

**6.05** **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **10.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **4.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.0** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

**8.0** **The Greatest Auction** (T) The bidders compete for two vintage Hermès handbags, a print by street artist Invader, a 1970s illuminated furniture shop sign and a skateboard designed by Virgil Abloh.
**9.0** **Grand Designs: The Streets** (T) Tim from Bicester takes on a self-build project in Graven Hill.

**10.0** **Depp v Heard** (T) The trial concludes. Last in the series.
**11.05** **Gogglebox** (T) (R)
**1.05** **My Name Is Reeva** (T) **2.0** The Lateish Show With Mo Gilligan (T) (R) **2.55** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Dublin (T) (R) **3.25** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **4.15** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **5.10** Moneybags (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.15** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM My Daughter's Secret (Ken Friss, 2021) (T) **4.0** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Eggheads (T) (R) **7.0** Jane McDonald: My Yorkshire (T) (R)

**8.0** **The Yorkshire Vet** (T) Peter treats a farmer's labrador that is struggling to walk after cutting itself on a nail.
**9.0** **Ben Fogle and the Buried City** (T) The presenter explores Montserrat's capital, Plymouth, which is now a volcanic ash-covered ghost town after a series of eruptions in the 1990s.

**10.30** **The Man Who Took Shannon Matthews** (T) (R)
**11.55** **Shoplifters & Scammers: At War With the Law** (T) (R)
**1.0** **Teleshopping** (T) **3.0** The Yorkshire Vet (T) (R) **3.55** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (T) (R) **4.45** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.10** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.30** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Railways: The Making of a Nation** (T) (R) The birth of commuting. **7.30** Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam (T) (R) The invention of the steam turbine.

**8.0** **As Time Goes By** (T) (R) Lionel asks Jean on an all-expenses-paid cruise.
**8.30** **Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?** (T) (R) Terry tracks down some of his former girlfriends.
**9.0** **Expedition Volcano** (T) (R) Part one of two. Documentary following scientists studying volcanos.

**10.0** **Storyville: Inside Kabul** (T) Animation about the Taliban.
**10.30** **Escape from Kabul Airport** (T) (R) The inside story.
**11.45** **Britain and the Sea** (T) (R)
**12.45** **Storyville: Welcome to Chechnya – The Gay Purge** (T) (R) **2.25** Railways: The Making of a Nation (T) (R) **2.55** The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway (T) (R)

## Other channels

### BBC Three

**7.0pm** Top Gear **8.0** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **8.30** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **9.0** The Apprentice Australia **10.10** The Young Offenders **10.45** The Young Offenders **11.15** I Kissed a Boy **12.05** I Kissed a Boy **12.45** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **1.45** The Young Offenders **2.20** The Young Offenders **2.50** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton **3.20** Meet the Khans: Big in Bolton

### Dave

**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.10** Secrets of the Supercars **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Cops on the Rock **10.0** Storage Hunters UK **10.30** Storage Hunters UK **11.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **12.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **1.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Secrets of the Supercars **5.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.35** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Room 101 **9.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **10.0** QI XL **11.0** Meet the Richardsons **11.40** Would I Lie to You? **12.20** QI XL **1.20** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4

**6.0am** Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Neighborhood **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **9.0** The Big Celebrity Detox **10.0** The Inbetweeners **10.35** The Inbetweeners **11.10** Naked Attraction **12.15** Naked Attraction **1.20** The Big Celebrity Detox **2.25** The Inbetweeners **2.50** The Inbetweeners **3.20** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **4.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **5.0** The Neighborhood

### Film4

**11.0am** FILM The Wrong Box (1966) **1.10** FILM First Men in the Moon (1964) **3.15** FILM The Cockleshell Heroes (1955) **5.15** FILM The Guns of Fort Petticoat (1957) **6.55** FILM Sister Act (1992) **9.0** FILM Alien: Covenant (2017) **11.20** FILM The Craft: Legacy (2020) **1.10** FILM Joy (2015)

### ITV2

**6.0am** World's Funniest Videos **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** One Tree Hill **9.0** Dawson's Creek **10.0** Secret Crush **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Superstore **7.30** Superstore **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** Hell's Kitchen **10.0** Family Guy **10.35** Family Guy **11.0** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.0** American Dad! **12.30** Bob's Burgers **12.55** Bob's Burgers **1.25** Superstore **1.55** Superstore **2.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max

**6.0am** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Quantum Leap **10.0** The Flash **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **12.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** MacGyver **3.0** Quantum Leap **4.0** Supergirl **5.0** The Flash **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Fantasy Island **10.0** Flintoff: Lord of the Fries **11.0** S.W.A.T **12.0** Brassic **1.0** The Force: North East **2.0** Road Wars **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** MacGyver **5.0** Highway Patrol

### Sky Arts

**6.0am** Sir Simon Rattle: Beethoven Symphonies **7.30** Discovering Dance on Film **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Groucho Marx **12.0** The Sixties **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The Art of Architecture **3.0** The Directors **4.0** Discovering: Jean Harlow **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** The Art of the Garden **8.0** Andrea Bocelli: The Journey **9.0** FILM Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am (2019) **11.15** Art Traffickers: Treasures Stolen from the Tombs **12.15** Christian Hook: Painting the Invisible **1.30** Rendezvous With Marlene **3.40** Sky Arts Book Club **4.40** Auction: David Gilmour Special **5.10** Auction **5.35** Auction


*Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am, Sky Arts*

### Sky Atlantic

**6.0am** Fish Town **7.55** The Wire **10.05** True Blood **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** Ray Donovan **3.30** The Wire **5.45** True Blood **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** Gangs of London **10.05** Perry Mason **11.10** Treme **12.20** The Night Of **1.30** The L Word: Generation Q **2.30** Game of Thrones **3.35** In Treatment **4.05** Fish Town

## Radio

### Radio 3

**6.30am** Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Ligeti (2/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Violinist Jennifer Pike joins sarod players Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash to perform folk music from Bengal and Assam, plus JS Bach. (1/4) **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Leonidas Kavakos conducts the Danish National Symphony Orchestra in symphonies by Brahms and Haydn. **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Rachmaninov's Vespers is interwoven with African musical traditions in a performance from cellist Abel Selaocoe and the BBC Singers, conducted by Sofi Jeannin. **10.0** Free Thinking. John Gallagher looks at the Manchester Jewish Museum. **10.45** The Essay: Death in Trieste. Sean Williams explores the speed at which the trial was reported across Europe. (2/5) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

### Radio 4

**6.0am** Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** The Life Scientific. Prof Jim Al-Khalili talks to leading scientists. (1/6) **9.30** One to One (1/6) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: The West. By Naoíse Mac Sweeney. (2/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Living With AI **11.30** Sound Towns. Investigating the origins of Fife's New Folk in East Neuk. (3/4) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Call You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Taking Issue With Shakespeare. Prof Emma Smith and Will Self discuss toxic masculinity and Hamlet. (2/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** The Bully. Drama, by Zalie Burrow. (R) **3.0** The Kitchen Cabinet (R) **3.30** Costing the Earth. Steve Backshall investigates why becoming more energy efficient is so expensive. **4.0** Law in Action. With Joshua Rozenberg. (1/4) **4.30** Great Lives. A profile of German novelist Thoman Mann. (8/9) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Olga Koch: OK Computer. The comedian explores the technological world. (1/4) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** File on 4 (R) **8.40** In Touch **9.0** All in the Mind (5/10) **9.30** The Life Scientific (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Making of Another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece (7/10) **11.0** The Confessional. With comic writer David Quantick. (6/6) (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: The West (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day

### Radio 4 Extra

**6.0am** Shadows in Bronze (5/6) **6.30** The Wolf Far Hence (2/6) **7.0** In My Mind's Eye (2/5) **7.15** Dead Cert (2/5) **7.30** North By Northamptonshire (5/6) **8.0** The Goon Show (19/26) **8.30** Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel (3/6) **9.0** Who Goes There? (2/6) **9.30** Big Town All Stars (4/4) **10.0** The Prisoner (2/4) **11.0** Shadows in Bronze (5/6) **11.30** The Wolf Far Hence (2/6) **12.0** In My Mind's Eye (2/5) **12.15** Dead Cert (2/5) **12.30** North By Northamptonshire (5/6) **1.0** The Goon Show (19/26) **1.30** Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel (3/6) **2.0** Who Goes There? (2/6) **2.30** Big Town All Stars (4/4) **3.0** The Prisoner (2/4) **4.0** Shadows in Bronze (5/6) **4.30** The Wolf Far Hence (2/6) **5.0** In My Mind's Eye (2/5) **5.15** Dead Cert (2/5) **5.30** North By Northamptonshire (5/6) **6.0** The Goon Show (19/26) **6.30** Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel (3/6) **7.0** Who Goes There? (2/6) **7.30** Big Town All Stars (4/4) **8.0** Joan Collins: A Life in Lipstick (2/2) **9.0** Mastertapes (6/10) **9.30** Ruth Rendell Stories **9.45** The Shadow Over Innsmouth (12/15) **10.0** Comedy Club: Wosson Cornwall (4/4) **10.30** The Jason Byrne Show (6/6) **11.0** It Is Rocket Science (1/4) **11.15** Paperback Hell (1/6) **11.30** ElvenQuest (6/6) **12.0** The Prisoner (2/4) **1.0** Shadows in Bronze (5/6) **1.30** The Wolf Far Hence (2/6) **2.0** In My Mind's Eye (2/5) **2.15** Dead Cert (2/5) **2.30** North By Northamptonshire (5/6) **3.0** The Goon Show (19/26) **3.30** Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel (3/6) **4.0** Who Goes There? (2/6) **4.30** Big Town All Stars (4/4) **5.0** The Prisoner (3/4)


*Kids, Channel 4*

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Rip Off Britain (T) **10.0** Frontline Fightback (T) **10.45** Defenders UK (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

**8.0** **The Repair Shop** (T) (R) The experts work on a King Charles II painting in need of restoration, a well-travelled trunk and a broken engagement ring.

**9.0** **The Great British Sewing Bee** (T) New series. Sara Pascoe, Patrick Grant and Esme Young welcome 12 sewers to the competition.

**10.0** **News** (T)
**10.30** **Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.40** **I Kissed a Boy** (T) (R) Mikey makes a decision that sends shockwaves through the masseria.
**11.25** **I Kissed a Boy** (T) (R) Dannii Minogue shakes things up by welcoming three single men to the villa.
**12.10** **Weather** (T) **12.15** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.15** **Homes Under the Hammer** (T) (R) **7.15** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Inside the Factory (T) (R) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **11.0** News (T) **11.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** James Martin's Food Map of Britain (T) (R) **2.45** A Countryside Summer (T) (R) **3.15** Japan: Earth's Enchanted Islands (T) (R) **4.15** Interior Design Masters (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** House of Games (T) (R) **6.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) **7.0** Digging for Britain (T) (R)

**8.0** **RHS Chelsea Flower Show** (T) The BBC gardening team present more highlights.

**9.0** **11 Minutes: America's Deadliest Mass Shooting** (T) The FBI joins the investigation into the attack.

**9.45** **11 Minutes: America's Deadliest Mass Shooting** (T) The effect of the attack on the survivors. Last in the series.

**10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather
**11.15** **Unspun World With John Simpson** (T) News review.
**11.40** **Forensics: The Real CSI** (T)
**12.40** **Sign Zone** Frontline Fightback (T) (R) **1.25** Rip Off Britain (T) (R) **2.10** Saving Lives in Leeds (T) (R) **3.10** Gordon Ramsay's Future Food Stars (T) (R) **4.10** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

**8.0** **Coronation Street** (T) Paul realises there is something wrong with his foot, and Craig urges Faye to follow her heart.

**9.0** **Maryland** (T) Richard and Jim descend on Bayview, and while the family try to reconnect, the fallout from Mary's actions continues to spread. Last in the series.

**10.0** **News** (T) Weather
**10.30** **Local News** (T) Weather
**10.45** **Peston** (T) Political chat.
**11.40** **Heathrow: Britain's Busiest Airport** (T) (R)
**12.05** **Shop: Ideal World 3.0** Tonight: All-Inclusive Holidays – Unpacked (T) (R) **3.25** Maryland (T) (R) **4.20** Save Money: Lose Weight (T) (R) **4.45** Unwind With ITV (T)

## Channel 4

**6.05** **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **10.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **4.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.0** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

**8.0** **Location, Location, Location** (T) Kirstie meets Karen and Richard who are looking for a house in the West Midlands.

**9.0** **Kids** (T) As they approach adulthood, Havana hopes the service can help her find the father she has never known, and Kane wants to understand why he was taken into care. Last in the series.

**10.0** **Naked Attraction** (T)
**11.05** **First Dates** (T) (R)
**12.05** **My Name Is Reeva** (T) **1.0** 24 Hours in A&E (T) (R) **1.55** Grand Designs: The Streets (T) (R) **2.50** Love It Or List It (T) **3.20** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **4.10** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **5.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) **5.10** Moneybags (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.15** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Stalked By My Teacher (David DeCoteau, 2020) (T) **4.0** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Eggheads (T) (R) **7.0** Jane McDonald: My Yorkshire (T) (R)

**8.0** **Natural History Museum: World of Wonder** (T) Tori the ancient mammal expert meets artist Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg.

**9.0** **999: Critical Condition** (T) Lucy is rushed into the emergency department after her horse falls on her, and Paul Hancock fears she may never walk again.

**10.0** **Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts** (T) (R)
**11.05** **A&E After Dark** (T) (R)
**12.05** **999: Criminals Caught on Camera** (T) (R) **1.0** Teleshopping (T) **3.0** Inside the Tower of London (T) (R) **3.45** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (T) (R) **4.35** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.0** Great Artists (T) (R) **5.25** Milkshake!

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Railways: The Making of a Nation** (T) (R) How the railways changed the culinary tastes of Londoners.

**7.30** **Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor** (T) (R) George McGavin studies a 400-year-old tree as it adapts through the different seasons of the year.

**9.0** **Secrets of Size: Atoms to Supergalaxies** (T) (R) Part one of two. Jim Al-Khalili explores the universe at the smallest scales.

**10.0** **Lucky Sunil** (T) (R) Andrew Davies's 1988 satirical drama about an Indian law student who arrives in London.
**11.15** **Andrew Davies: Rewriting the Classics** (T) (R) The writer discusses adapting classic novels for television.
**12.15** **Oak Tree** (T) (R) **1.45** Railways (R) **2.15** Secrets of Size (T) (R)

# Other channels

### BBC Three
**7.0pm** Top Gear **8.0** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **9.0** Rookie Nurses **9.30** Rookie Nurses **10.0** FILM Baby Done (2020) **11.30** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **12.30** Rookie Nurses **1.0** Rookie Nurses **1.30** Top Gear **2.30** My Mate's a Bad Date **2.55** Rookie Nurses **3.25** Rookie Nurses

### Dave
**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.10** Secrets of the Supercars **8.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **9.0** Cop Car Workshop **10.0** Storage Hunters UK **10.30** Storage Hunters UK **11.0** Rick Stein's Long Weekends **12.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **1.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Secrets of the Supercars **5.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Room 101 **9.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **10.0** Mock the Week **10.40** Mock the Week **11.20** QI **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** QI **1.20** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4
**6.0am** Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Neighborhood **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **9.0** The Big Celebrity Detox **10.0** Gogglebox **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Naked Attraction **1.15** The Big Celebrity Detox **2.20** Gogglebox **3.15** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **4.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.55** The Neighborhood

### Film4
**11.0am** FILM Timberjack (1954) **12.55** FILM To Hell and Back (1955) **3.05** FILM Tomahawk (1951) **4.45** FILM High Noon (1952) **6.25** FILM Star Trek Into Darkness (2013) **9.0** FILM Men in Black (1997) **10.55** FILM Fight Club (1999) **1.45** FILM American Gigolo (1980)

### ITV2
**6.0am** World's Funniest Videos **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** One Tree Hill **9.0** Dawson's Creek **10.0** Secret Crush **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Superstore **7.30** Superstore **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** Hell's Kitchen **10.0** Shopping With Keith Lemon **10.30** Family Guy **11.0** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **11.55** American Dad! **12.25** Bob's Burgers **12.55** Bob's Burgers **1.25** Superstore **1.55** Superstore **2.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max
**6.0am** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Quantum Leap **10.0** The Flash **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** MacGyver **3.0** Quantum Leap **4.0** Supergirl **5.0** The Flash **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** S.W.A.T **9.0** Strike Back: Shadow Warfare **10.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **10.45** Last King of the Cross **11.45** The Force: North East **1.45** Road Wars **2.40** Road Wars **3.05** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** MacGyver **5.0** Highway Patrol **5.30** Highway Patrol

### Sky Arts
**6.0am** Darbar: Music of India **7.0** Rachmaninov: Rhapsody/The Two Pigeons **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **9.30** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Jean Harlow **12.0** Sherlock Holmes vs Arthur Conan Doyle **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The Big Design Challenge **3.0** The Directors **4.0** Discovering: Lee Marvin **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Discovering: Meg Ryan **8.0** Portrait Artist of the Year 2018 **9.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **10.0** The Art of the Album Cover **11.50** Nina Simone: The Lost Album **1.20** Joe Bonamassa: British Blues Explosion **3.30** Lenny Henry's Got the Blues **4.30** Marina Abramović Takes Over TV **5.30** Auction


*Baby Done, BBC Three*

### Sky Atlantic
**6.0am** Fish Town **7.55** The Wire **10.05** True Blood **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** Ray Donovan **3.30** The Wire **5.45** True Blood **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** Perry Mason **10.05** Succession **11.25** The Night Of **12.35** Sharp Objects **1.40** Der Pass **2.50** Game of Thrones **4.0** Fish Town

# Radio

### Radio 3
**6.30am** Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Ligeti (3/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. From the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, bass-baritone Shenyang and pianist Simon Lepper perform music celebrating Chinese New Year. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Ryan Bancroft conducts the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in Nielsen's Symphony No 4 "The Inextinguishable". Plus, music from the 2023 Helsingborg guitar festival. **4.0** Choral Evensong. From St Paul's Cathedral. **5.0** In Tune. With American pianist Stephen Kovacevich. **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Vasily Petrenko conducts the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and soprano Adela Zaharia in Bernd Richard Deutsch's Phantasma, R Strauss's Brentano Lieder (Six Songs) and Scriabin's Symphony No 3 "The Divine Poem". **10.0** Free Thinking. A discussion about mermaids. **10.45** The Essay: Death in Trieste. Sean Williams explores the life of victim Johann Wincklemann. (3/5) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

### Radio 4
**6.0am** Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** More Or Less. With Tim Harford. (1/6) **9.30** Please Protect Abraham (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: The West. By Naoíse Mac Sweeney. (3/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Faith on the Factory Floor, Flock in a Hard Hat (R) **11.30** A Very British Cult. Lighthouse International Group ends up in court. (8/8) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Taking Issue With Shakespeare. Prof Emma Smith and Fiona Shaw discuss Covid and As You Like It. (3/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Happy Hour. Drama, by Liv Fowler. **3.0** Money Box Live **3.30** All in the Mind (R) **4.0** Thinking Allowed (8/10) **4.30** The Media Show **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Room 101 With Paul Merton. Claudia Winkleman talks about her pet hates. (1/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** The Moral Maze. With Michael Buerk. (1/10) **9.0** Costing the Earth (R) **9.30** The Media Show (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Making of Another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece. By Tom Hanks. (8/10) **11.0** Twayna Mayne: Black Woman. The comedian explores her identity as a Black British woman. (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: The West (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

### Radio 4 Extra
**6.0am** Shadows in Bronze (6/6) **6.30** The Wolf Far Hence (3/6) **7.0** In My Mind's Eye (3/5) **7.15** Dead Cert (3/5) **7.30** Women Talking About Cars (4/4) **8.0** Hancock's Half Hour (2/20) **8.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (2/6) **9.0** Nature Table (2/6) **9.30** Robin and Wendy's Wet Weekends (1/4) **10.0** The Prisoner (3/4) **11.0** Shadows in Bronze (6/6) **11.30** The Wolf Far Hence (3/6) **12.0** In My Mind's Eye (3/5) **12.15** Dead Cert (3/5) **12.30** Women Talking About Cars (4/4) **1.0** Hancock's Half Hour (2/20) **1.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (2/6) **2.0** Nature Table (2/6) **2.30** Robin and Wendy's Wet Weekends (1/4) **3.0** The Prisoner (3/4) **4.0** Shadows in Bronze (6/6) **4.30** The Wolf Far Hence (3/6) **5.0** In My Mind's Eye (3/5) **5.15** Dead Cert (3/5) **5.30** Women Talking About Cars (4/4) **6.0** Hancock's Half Hour (2/20) **6.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (2/6) **7.0** Nature Table (2/6) **7.30** Robin and Wendy's Wet Weekends (1/4) **8.0** Tears of a Clown **9.0** Short Cuts (4/6) **9.30** Ruth Rendell Stories (3/5) **9.45** The Shadow Over Innsmouth (13/15) **10.0** Comedy Club: Lemn Sissay's Social Enterprise (2/4) **10.30** Pick-Ups (5/6) **11.0** The Sofa of Time (2/6) **11.30** The Mel and Sue Thing (2/6) **12.0** The Prisoner (3/4) **1.0** Shadows in Bronze (6/6) **1.30** The Wolf Far Hence (3/6) **2.0** In My Mind's Eye (3/5) **2.15** Dead Cert (3/5) **2.30** Women Talking About Cars (4/4) **3.0** Hancock's Half Hour (2/20) **3.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (2/6) **4.0** Nature Table (2/6) **4.30** Robin and Wendy's Wet Weekends (1/4) **5.0** The Prisoner (4/4)

# Thursday


*Whoopi Goldberg: This Cultural Life, BBC Four*

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Rip Off Britain (T) **10.0** Frontline Fightback (T) **10.45** Defenders UK (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

**8.0** **MasterChef** (T) The hopefuls are asked to create a dish with an unlikely mix of ingredients.

**9.0** **Gordon Ramsay's Future Food Stars** (T) After a last task at Ibrox Stadium, the final three face a grilling as each tries to convince Gordon to back them with a £150,000 investment.

**10.0** **News** (T)
**10.30** **Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.40** **Question Time** (T) Fiona Bruce chairs the debate in Gravesend, Kent.
**11.40** **Newscast** (T) A weekly round-up from Westminster, discussing the biggest stories in politics.
**12.10** **Weather for the Week Ahead** (T) **12.15** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.30** **Money for Nothing** (T) **7.15** Escape to the Country (T) **8.0** A Special School (T) **8.30** Caught Red Handed (T) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **11.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Food Map of Britain (T) (R) **2.45** A Countryside Summer (T) **3.15** Japan (T) **4.15** Ancient Invisible Cities (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) **6.0** House of Games (T) **6.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) **7.0** Brian Cox: Amol Rajan Interviews (T) **7.45** Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs (T) (R)

**8.0** **RHS Chelsea Flower Show** (T) More highlights from this year's event in London.

**9.0** **Strike: Inside the Unions** (T) New series. Documentary about the wave of industrial action that engulfed the UK at the end of 2022, featuring access to union leaders including Mick Lynch and Pat Cullen.

**10.0** **Inside No 9** (T) A couple say goodbye. Last in the series.
**10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather
**11.15** **11 Minutes: America's Deadliest Mass Shooting** (T)
**12.40** **Sign Zone** Dr Xand's Con Or Cure (T) (R) **1.25** Forensics: The Real CSI (T) (R) **2.25** Iolo's Borderlands (T) (R) **2.55** MasterChef (T) (R) **3.25** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

**8.30** **Tonight: AI – What You Need to Know** (T) Rachel Younger explores the promise and the perils of artificial intelligence and investigates if humankind can keep up with the machines.

**9.0** **It'll Be Alright on the Night** (T) (R) Compilation of TV clangers, including Olly Murs' chair accident.

**10.0** **News** (T) Weather
**10.30** **Local News** (T) Weather
**10.45** **DNA Journey** (T) (R) Actors Larry Lamb and Alison Steadman investigate their respective family histories.
**11.50** **All Elite Wrestling: Rampage** (T) Fight action.
**12.45** **Shop: Ideal World** **3.0** Bling (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Family Fortunes (T)

## Channel 4

**6.05** **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **10.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **4.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.0** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

**8.0** **24 Hours in A&E** (T) (R) A 51-year-old builder is rushed into A&E after falling 18ft from scaffolding on to concrete, while an 86-year-old retired policeman is brought in with a head injury.

**9.0** **Taskmaster** (T) Mae Martin immediately forgets the only rule to a task in a quasi-semi-final.

**10.0** **Open House: The Great Sex Experiment** (T)
**11.05** **Naked Attraction** (T) (R)
**12.05** **The World's Most Luxurious Holidays** (T) (R) **1.05** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **1.55** FILM Slender Man (2018) (T) **3.30** Unreported World (T) (R) **3.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **4.50** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake!** **9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.15** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Saving Billy (Roxy Shih, 2021) (T) **4.0** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Eggheads (T) (R) **7.0** Jane McDonald: My Yorkshire (T) (R)

**8.0** **Bargain Loving Brits By the Sea** (T) John and his daughter Thalia take their donkey business to the next level in Skegness.

**9.0** **Alexander Armstrong in Sri Lanka** (T) The presenter embarks on the second leg of his adventure, beginning with a train journey to the mountain town of Haputale.

**10.0** **Killer at the Crime Scene** (T)
**11.05** **Cause of Death** (T) (R)
**12.05** **Police Interceptors** (T) (R) **1.0** Teleshopping (T) **3.0** Inside the Tower of London (T) (R) **3.50** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (T) (R) **4.35** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.25** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Railways: The Making of a Nation** (T) (R) Liz McIvor examines class divisions on trains. **7.30** Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain (T) (R) Norman engineering techniques.

**8.0** **A House Through Time** (T) (R) With David Olusoga.

**9.0** **Whoopi Goldberg: This Cultural Life** (T) (R) The actor talks to John Wilson about the influences that shaped her career.

**9.30** FILM **The Color Purple** (Steven Spielberg, 1985) (T) Drama, starring Whoopi Goldberg and Danny Glover.

**11.55** **Italy's Invisible Cities** (T) (R) Alexander Armstrong and Michael Scott explore Venice to discover how it became one of the most powerful places in medieval Europe.
**12.55** **Hans Zimmer: Hollywood Rebel** (T) (R) **1.55** Railways (T) (R) **2.25** Building of Britain (T) (R) **2.55** A House Through Time (T) (R)

# Other channels

## BBC Three

**7.0pm** Top Gear **8.0** MOTDx **8.30** MOTD Top 10: Dark Arts **9.0** Bad Education **10.0** Black Ops **10.30** Man Like Mobeen **11.40** Squad Goals: Britain's Youngest Football Boss **12.40** MOTDx **1.10** MOTD Top 10: Dark Arts **1.40** Man Like Mobeen **2.55** Bad Education

## Dave

**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.10** Secrets of the Supercars **8.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **9.0** Cop Car Workshop **10.0** Storage Hunters UK **11.0** Rick Stein's Long Weekends **12.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **1.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Secrets of the Supercars **5.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Room 101 **9.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **10.0** **Meet the Richardsons** **10.40** Mock the Week **12.40** QI **1.20** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

## E4

**6.0am** Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Neighborhood **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **10.30** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **9.0** The Big Celebrity Detox **10.0** Gogglebox **11.05** First Dates **12.10** The Big Celebrity Detox **1.15** Rick and Morty **1.50** Royal Crackers **2.15** Gogglebox **3.10** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **4.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.50** The Neighborhood

## Film4

**11.0am** FILM The Running Man (1963) **1.10** FILM Tobruk (1967) **3.25** FILM Hatari! (1962) **6.35** FILM Gods of Egypt (2016) **9.0** FILM Men in Black II (2002) **10.45** FILM Shallow Grave (1994) **12.35** FILM **Onoda: 10,000 Nights in the Jungle** (2021)

## ITV2

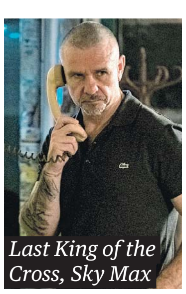
**6.0am** World's Funniest Videos **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** One Tree Hill **9.0** Dawson's Creek **10.0** Secret Crush **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Superstore **7.30** Superstore **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** Gordon, Gino and Fred: European Road Trip **10.0** Family Guy **10.30** Family Guy **11.0** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.0** American Dad! **12.25** Bob's Burgers **12.55** Bob's Burgers **1.25** Superstore **1.55** Superstore **2.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.45** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

## Sky Max

**6.0am** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Quantum Leap **10.0** The Flash **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** MacGyver **3.0** Quantum Leap **4.0** Supergirl **5.0** The Flash **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Rob & Romesh vs Andy Murray **9.0** **Last King of the Cross** **10.05** Fantasy Island **11.05** Resident Alien **12.05** NCIS: Los Angeles **1.05** The Force: North East **2.0** Stop, Search, Seize **4.0** Highway Patrol **4.30** Road Wars **5.0** MacGyver

## Sky Arts

**6.0am** André Rieu: Welcome to My World **7.0** André Rieu: Live in Brazil **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Lee Marvin **12.0** Julie Andrews Forever **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Art Traffickers: Treasures Stolen from the Tombs **3.0** Tales of the Unexpected **4.0** Discovering: Anthony Quinn **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Discovering: Gary Cooper **8.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **9.0** The Directors **10.0** Discovering Westerns on Film **11.30** Eric Clapton: Concert By the Lake – Band Du Lac **2.0** Joe Cocker: Mad Dogs & Englishmen **4.15** Bradley Wiggins on Mods **5.10** Video Killed the Radio Star **5.35** Video Killed the Radio Star


*Last King of the Cross, Sky Max*

## Sky Atlantic

**6.0am** Fish Town **7.55** The Wire **10.20** True Blood **12.30** Game of Thrones **1.35** Ray Donovan **3.45** The Wire **5.40** True Blood **7.50** Game of Thrones **9.0** Billions **11.15** Gangs of London **12.15** In Treatment **12.45** Game of Thrones **2.0** Der Pass **3.0** The L Word: Generation Q **4.10** Fish Town **5.05** Fish Town

# Radio

## Radio 3

**6.30am** Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Ligeti (4/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Pianist Clare Hammond plays music by Beethoven, Albéniz, Coleridge-Taylor and Hélène de Montgeroult at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The Malmö Symphony Orchestra perform the first act of Hugo Alfvén's ballet-pantomime The Mountain King. Plus, Voces8 recorded at the Rheingau festival. **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. At Glasgow City Halls, Ryan Wigglesworth conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and cellist Laura van der Heijden in R Strauss's Till Eulenspiegel, Cheryl Frances-Hoad's Cello Concerto (Earth, Sea, Air) and Elgar's Symphony No 2. **10.0** Free Thinking. How our understanding of smell and of sneezing has changed. **10.45** The Essay: Death in Trieste. A focus on Venice and echoes of Wincklemann's demise. (4/5) **11.0** The Night Tracks **11.30** Unclassified (R) **12.30** Through the Night

## Radio 4

**6.0am** Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** In Our Time **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: The West. By Naoíse Mac Sweeney. (4/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** From Our Own Correspondent (1/9) **11.30** Great Lives (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** You and Yours **12.30** Sliced Bread (3/10) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Taking Issue With Shakespeare. Prof Emma Smith and Mercy Muroki explore what Shakespeare reveals about the monarchy. (4/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Nightmare(ish). Drama, by Ollie George Clark. **3.0** Ramblings. Clare Balding visits Ashdown Forest with podcasters, bird mimics and conservationists. (2/7) **3.27** Radio 4 Appeal: Zambia Orphans Aid UK (R) **3.30** Open Book (R) **4.0** Princess. Anita Anand explores the complicated life of Princess Margaret. (8/10) **4.30** Inside Science **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** It's a Fair Cop (R) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** Law in Action (R) **8.30** The Patch. A random visit to Sunderland Point, Morecambe. (R) **9.0** Inside Science (R) **9.30** In Our Time **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Making of Another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece. By Tom Hanks. (9/10) **11.0** Rylan: How to Be a Man. Boxer Amir Khan talks to Rylan about masculinity. (2/10) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: The West (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

## Radio 4 Extra

**6.0am** Who Killed Zebedee? (1/2) **6.30** The Wolf Far Hence (4/6) **7.0** In My Mind's Eye (4/5) **7.15** Dead Cert (4/5) **7.30** On the Rocks (1/4) **8.0** The Burkiss Way **8.30** Thank You, Mrs Fothergill (4/4) **9.0** Booked (6/6) **9.30** Clare in the Community (3/6) **10.0** The Prisoner (4/4) **11.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (1/2) **11.30** The Wolf Far Hence (4/6) **12.0** In My Mind's Eye (4/5) **12.15** Dead Cert (4/5) **12.30** On the Rocks (1/4) **1.0** The Burkiss Way **1.30** Thank You, Mrs Fothergill (4/4) **2.0** Booked (6/6) **2.30** Clare in the Community (3/6) **3.0** The Prisoner (4/4) **4.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (1/2) **4.30** The Wolf Far Hence (4/6) **5.0** In My Mind's Eye (4/5) **5.15** Dead Cert (4/5) **5.30** On the Rocks (1/4) **6.0** The Burkiss Way **6.30** Thank You, Mrs Fothergill (4/4) **7.0** Booked (6/6) **7.30** Clare in the Community (3/6) **8.0** Writing: The Midlands (3/3) **9.0** Great Lives (1/9) **9.30** Ruth Rendell Stories (4/5) **9.45** The Shadow Over Innsmouth (14/15) **10.0** Comedy Club: It's a Fair Cop (3/4) **10.30** Tom Wrigglesworth's Hang-Ups (2/4) **11.0** Ida Barr: Artificial Hip Hop (2/4) **11.15** Political Animals (1/4) **11.30** Rigor Mortis (3/6) **12.0** The Prisoner (4/4) **1.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (1/2) **1.30** The Wolf Far Hence (4/6) **2.0** In My Mind's Eye (4/5) **2.15** Dead Cert (4/5) **2.30** On the Rocks (1/4) **3.0** The Burkiss Way **3.30** Thank You, Mrs Fothergill (4/4) **4.0** Booked (6/6) **4.30** Clare in the Community (3/6) **5.0** Shy Baby **5.45** Short Works



*Black Ops, BBC One*

## BBC One

**6.0** **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Rip Off Britain (T) **10.0** Frontline Fightback (T) **10.45** Defenders UK (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Hope Street (T) (R) **2.30** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** RHS Chelsea Flower Show (T)

**8.0** **Question of Sport** (T) With Ethan Pinnock, Hollie Pearne-Webb, Richard Kilty and Tonia Couch.
**8.30** **MasterChef** (T) The brief is to cook a dish both "theatrical and fantastical".
**9.0** **Have I Got News for You** (T) Steph McGovern hosts.
**9.30** **Black Ops** (T) Dom and Kay seek an undercover contact.

**10.0** **News** (T)
**10.30** **Regional News** (T) Weather
**10.40** **The Chris & Rosie Ramsey Show** (T) Chatshow.
**11.25** **Bump** (T) Keeks accidently sees Santi with Jacinda.
**11.55** **Bump** (T) Jacinda starts spouting Bible quotes.
**12.25** FILM **The Photograph** (2020) (T) Drama. **2.05** Weather (T) **2.10** News (T)

## BBC Two

**6.15** **Homes Under the Hammer** (T) (R) **7.15** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (T) (R) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **11.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics UK (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Food Map of Britain (T) (R) **2.45** A Countryside Summer (T) (R) **3.15** Big Cats About the House (T) (R) **4.15** Ancient Invisible Cities (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** House of Games (T) (R) **6.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) **7.0** Beechgrove Garden (T) **7.30** Villages By the Sea (T)

**8.0** **RHS Chelsea Flower Show** (T) Highlights of the gardens and tips for amateur horticulturists.
**9.0** **Hidden Treasures of the National Trust** (T) The curators continue their restoration of Paul McCartney's childhood home, and uncover a historic collection of photos.

**10.0** **Detectorists** (T) (R)
**10.30** **Newsnight** (T) Weather
**11.05** **MOTDx** (T) (R) Football chat.
**11.35** **Strike: Inside the Unions** (T) (R) Documentary.
**12.35** **Sign Zone** Landfill: Britain's Toxic Secrets (T) (R) **1.05** The Mysterious Mr Lagerfeld (T) (R) **2.35** Interior Design Masters (T) (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two (T)

## ITV1

**6.0** **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Dickinson's Real Deal (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

**8.0** **Coronation Street** (T) An anxious Paul delays facing his fate in court, Billy quizzes Dee-Dee, Evelyn calls an ambulance for Roy, and Isabella learns she is unable to return home to Italy.
**9.0** **Beat the Chasers: Celebrity Special** (T) With Omid Djalili, Richard Whitehead, Jenny Eclair and Clive Mantle.

**10.0** **News** (T) Weather
**10.30** **Local News** (T) Weather
**10.45** FILM **Fast & Furious 7** (James Wan, 2015) (T) Action thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel and Paul Walker.
**1.0** **Shop: Ideal World** **3.0** Million Pound Pawn (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Ainsley's Caribbean Kitchen (T) (R)

## Channel 4

**6.05** **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** The King of Queens (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **10.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (T) (R) **4.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.0** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

**8.0** **The Big Interiors Battle** (T) In the Peak District, the last three contenders deal with a multi-use common room space that needs some love and which must fit in with its beautiful surroundings.
**9.0** **Gogglebox** (T) The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week.

**10.0** **The Lateish Show With Mo Gilligan** (T) With Sam Ryder.
**11.05** **Sean Lock: Keep It Light** (T)
**12.10** FILM **Crawl** (Alexandre Aja, 2019) (T) **1.40** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **2.25** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **4.40** Love It Or List It (T) (R) **5.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **5.15** Great British History Hunters (T) (R)

## Channel 5

**6.0** **Milkshake!** **9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.15** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Secret Stalker: Abducting Lacy (Lisa France, 2019) (T) **4.0** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Eggheads (T) (R) **7.0** Jane McDonald: My Yorkshire (T) (R)

**8.0** **Susan Calman's Grand Day Out** (T) The comedian travels to the south coast of Wales to visit the Gower peninsula.
**9.0** **Ken Dodd: 60 Years of Laughter** (T) (R) A celebration of the comic, who was embraced by the emerging TV age while keeping alive the old-school comedy of the music hall.

**11.0** FILM **True Lies** (James Cameron, 1994) (T) Comedy, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jamie Lee Curtis.
**1.30** **Teleshopping** (T) **3.30** Inside the Tower of London (T) (R) **4.20** OMG! Boy Beauty Addicts (T) (R) **5.05** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.30** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

## BBC Four

**7.0** **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) From 1994, with Cyndi Lauper, Madonna and Bon Jovi. **7.30** Top of the Pops (T) (R) From 1994, with PJ & Duncan, Gloria Estefan and Sting.

**8.0** **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) From 1982, with Japan, Soft Cell, Duran Duran and Madness.
**8.30** **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) From 1979, with Skids, Roxy Music and Tubeway Army.
**9.0** **Cilla at the BBC** (T) (R) Clips from Top of the Pops and The Royal Variety Performance, and a 1973 duet with Marc Bolan.

**10.0** **Sounds of the Sixties** (T) (R) Solo artists from the archive.
**10.30** **Dusty** (T) (R) A 1967 edition, with guest Mel Tormé.
**10.55** **Lulu's Back in Town** (T) (R) Archive performances.
**11.20** **Sir Cliff Richard at the BBC** (T) (R) Song compilation.
**12.20** **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) **2.15** Cilla at the BBC (T) (R) **3.15** Sounds of the Sixties (T) (R)

## Other channels

### BBC Three
**7.0pm** Top Gear **8.0** Sky High Club: Scotland and Beyond **9.0** FILM Eighth Grade (2018) **10.30** I Kissed a Boy **12.0** Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star **1.0** Rookie Nurses **2.05** Hot Property **2.35** My Mate's a Bad Date **3.0** Sky High Club: Scotland and Beyond

### Dave
**6.0am** Teleshopping **7.10** Secrets of the Supercars **8.0** Special Ops: Crime Squad UK **9.0** Cop Car Workshop **10.0** Storage Hunters UK **11.0** Rick Stein's Long Weekends **12.0** The Force: Behind the Line **1.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.0** Top Gear **4.0** Secrets of the Supercars **5.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall: Unpacked **6.0** Taskmaster **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **9.0** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **9.40** Meet the Richardsons **10.20** Meet the Richardsons **11.0** QI XL **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** QI **1.20** Taskmaster **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

### E4
**6.0am** Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Neighborhood **9.30** The Neighborhood **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **10.30** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **9.0** FILM Crocodile Dundee (1986) **10.55** Naked Attraction **11.55** Naked Attraction **1.0** First Dates **2.05** Gogglebox **3.05** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **3.50** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.40** The Neighborhood **5.05** The Neighborhood **5.30** Modern Family

### Film4
**11.0am** FILM The Guns of Fort Petticoat (1957) **12.40** FILM Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970) **3.30** FILM The Red Pony (1949) **5.15** FILM A Lawless Street (1955) **6.55** FILM Daddy's Home 2 (2017) **9.0** FILM Men in Black 3 (2012) **11.10** FILM The Sum of All Fears (2002) **1.30** FILM Freaks (2019)

### ITV2
**6.0am** World's Funniest Videos **6.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Dress to Impress **8.0** One Tree Hill **9.0** Dawson's Creek **10.0** Love Bites **11.0** Dress to Impress **12.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Celebrity Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Superstore **7.30** Superstore **8.0** Bob's Burgers **8.30** Bob's Burgers **9.0** FILM Bad Neighbours 2 (2016) **10.55** Family Guy **11.20** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.20** American Dad! **12.45** FILM Plebs: Soldiers of Rome (2022) **2.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **3.0** Teleshopping

### Sky Max
**6.0am** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Supergirl **9.0** Quantum Leap **10.0** The Flash **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **1.0** Hawaii Five-0 **2.0** MacGyver **3.0** Quantum Leap **4.0** Supergirl **5.0** The Flash **6.0** Enter the Spider-Verse: A Spider-Man Special **6.30** Football's Funniest Moments **7.0** A League of Their Own: European Road Trip **8.0** Strike Back: Legacy **9.0** Poker Face **11.20** Bel-Air **12.20** Road Wars **1.20** The Force: North East **2.15** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** MacGyver **5.0** Highway Patrol

### Sky Arts
**6.0am** Ludovico Einaudi: Elements - Live **7.15** Mario Lanza: The Best of Everything **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Anthony Quinn **12.0** National Treasures: The Art of Collecting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The Art of the Garden **3.0** The Directors **4.0** Discovering: Joan Crawford **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Discovering: Johnny Cash **8.0** Guy Garvey: From the Vaults **9.0** Peter Frampton: FCA! 35 Tour **11.0** FILM Madness: The Get Up! (2021) **12.50** Quadrophenia: Our Generation **1.50** Quadrophenia Reunited: 40 Years On **3.20** Classic Albums **4.20** The Movies **5.10** Video Killed the Radio Star **5.35** Video Killed the Radio Star



*Eighth Grade, BBC Three*

### Sky Atlantic
**6.0am** The Guest Wing **7.55** The Wire **9.55** True Blood **11.0** True Blood **12.05** Game of Thrones **1.20** Ray Donovan **3.30** Big Love **4.35** Big Love **5.45** True Blood **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** Souls **10.0** Souls **11.0** Yellowjackets **1.10** Sharp Objects **2.10** Game of Thrones **3.15** Der Pass **4.15** The Guest Wing

## Radio

### Radio 3
**6.30am** Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week (5/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Chineke! Wind Quintet play music by Ligeti, William Grant Still and Valerie Coleman. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The conclusion of Hugo Alfvén's ballet-pantomime The Mountain King, with the Malmö SO. **4.30** The Listening Service (R) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Live from the Barbican Hall, London, Dima Slobodeniouk conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Mozart's Symphony No 35 in D major, "Haffner", Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms and Prokofiev's Symphony No 7 in C sharp minor. **10.0** The Verb **10.45** The Essay: Death in Trieste. Sean Williams reflects on the myriad conclusions about Johann Wincklemann. (5/5) **11.0** Late Junction **1.0** Composed With Devonté Hynes **2.0** Piano Flow With Gabriel **3.0** Through the Night

### Radio 4
**6.0am** Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** Desert Island Discs (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: The West - A New History of an Old Idea. By Naoíse Mac Sweeney. (5/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Burden of Proof. The experiences of LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum in the UK. **11.30** Ed Reardon's Week (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Archive on 4: The Socrates of San Francisco (R) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Taking Issue With Shakespeare. Michael Gove joins Emma Smith to consider the messages in King Lear. (5/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** An Eye for a Killing. Drama, by Colin MacDonald. (5/5) **2.45** Welcome to the Neighbourhood With Jayde Adams. The comedian and guest Nick Grimshaw review the world of online community forums. (1/12) **3.0** Gardeners' Question Time **3.45** Short Works. Gwen's Silver Fox, by John Sam Jones. **4.0** Last Word **4.30** More Or Less (R) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** The News Quiz. A special edition recorded on stage at the Hay festival. (5/7) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Screenshot. Ellen E Jones and Mark Kermode explore sport on screen, from Field of Dreams to Ted Lasso. (8/9) **8.0** Any Questions? **8.50** A Point of View **9.0** Listen to Britain (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime (10/10) **11.0** Americast **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: The West (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Please Protect Abraham

### Radio 4 Extra
**6.0am** Who Killed Zebedee? (2/2) **6.30** The Wolf Far Hence (5/6) **7.0** In My Mind's Eye (5/5) **7.15** Dead Cert (5/5) **7.30** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner (1/4) **8.0** Steptoe and Son (10/13) **8.30** Flying the Flag (6/8) **9.0** Act Your Age (2/6) **9.30** Bleak Expectations (4/6) **10.0** Shy Baby **10.45** Short Works **11.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (2/2) **11.30** The Wolf Far Hence (5/6) **12.0** In My Mind's Eye (5/5) **12.15** Dead Cert (5/5) **12.30** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner (1/4) **1.0** Steptoe and Son (10/13) **1.30** Flying the Flag (6/8) **2.0** Act Your Age (2/6) **2.30** Bleak Expectations (4/6) **3.0** Shy Baby **3.45** Short Works **4.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (2/2) **4.30** The Wolf Far Hence (5/6) **5.0** In My Mind's Eye (5/5) **5.15** Dead Cert (5/5) **5.30** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner (1/4) **6.0** Steptoe and Son (10/13) **6.30** Flying the Flag (6/8) **7.0** Act Your Age (2/6) **7.30** Bleak Expectations (4/6) **8.0** Taking Art to the People **8.30** A Good Read **9.0** The Curious Cases of Rutherford & Fry (4/12) **9.30** Ruth Rendell Stories **9.45** The Shadow Over Innsmouth (15/15) **10.0** Mark Steel's in Town (5/6) **11.0** Tim Key's Late Night Poetry Programme (3/6) **11.15** Knocker (3/6) **11.30** Les Kelly's Britain (3/4) **12.0** The Midnight House **12.45** Someone Like You (4/5) **1.0** Shy Baby **1.45** Short Works **2.0** Who Killed Zebedee? (2/2) **2.30** The Wolf Far Hence (5/6) **3.0** In My Mind's Eye (5/5) **3.15** Dead Cert (5/5) **3.30** Dr Phil's Bedside Manner (1/4) **4.0** Steptoe and Son (10/13) **4.30** Flying the Flag (6/8) **5.0** Act Your Age (2/6) **5.30** Bleak Expectations (4/6)*




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Andy Rourke, distinctive bassist central to the Smiths' sound *Obituaries, page 8*

**The Guardian** Saturday 20 May 2023

# Journal

Opinion and ideas

# Brexit has failed. Expect the blame game to turn very dark

**Jonathan Freedland**



It lasts no more than a second, but it is a moment for the ages. Interviewed on BBC Newsnight on Monday, Nigel Farage made a confession that, by rights, should end the debate that has split this country down the middle for much of the last decade. A month ahead of the seventh anniversary of the 2016 vote that took Britain out of the European Union, Farage said three words of striking simplicity and truth: "Brexit has failed."

Watch the clip over and over, for it is something to behold. Here is the arch-Brexiter himself, the man who dedicated his life to the cause of rupture from the EU, admitting it has been a disaster. Of course, as we shall see, he and his fellow Brexiters do not blame that failure on the idea itself, but it's the admission that counts. It offers grounds for modest celebration: now, at last, the contours of an emerging national consensus are visible, as remainers and leavers alike can join in agreement that this thing has not worked. And yet it comes at a price, one that also became darkly visible this week.

Start with the facts that even Farage can no longer duck. During the referendum campaign, he and his allies promised that Brexit would be a boon for the UK economy, unshackling it from Brussels red tape and releasing it into a roaring future. Seven years on, we can see the reality: a country in the grip of a cost of living crisis that means millions can no longer afford what they once regarded as the basics. Britain is becoming poorer and falling behind its peers. Ours is now forecast to be one of the worst-performing economies in the world, not merely seventh in the G7 but 20th in the G20 – behind even a Russia under toughening international sanctions – according to the International Monetary Fund.

The consequences of being poorer are seen and felt everywhere, whether it's in the 3m food parcels delivered by food banks last year, the family who can't get a mental health appointment for a troubled child, or in courts that are jammed and backlogged for years. For a while, the Brexiters could blame all our woes on anything but Brexit: Covid or Ukraine. But there's no hiding place now.

This week came a warning that post-Brexit trading arrangements with the EU threaten the very existence of the entire UK automotive industry, which employs some 800,000 people. Ford, Jaguar Land Rover and the owners of Vauxhall called on the government to renegotiate the Brexit deal. Such demands are getting louder. Next month, a thousand businesses, alongside representatives of farming and fishing, will gather in Birmingham for the Trade Unlocked conference, called to discuss a post-Brexit landscape most say has made commercial life infinitely harder and more bureaucratic. "Business is beginning to find its voice," one organiser tells me.

2

## Brexit has failed. Expect the blame game to turn very dark

**Jonathan Freedland**

← Continued from front

But it's not just the economic numbers. Remember, Farage and the others argued that a hit to GDP would be worth it, so long as Brexit fulfilled its other promises - most cherished among them, a reduction in the number of immigrants to the UK. Yet if you were among those persuaded, against the evidence, to see immigration as a cost, rather than a benefit, to the country, Brexit has failed on even that measure. Immigration has gone up, not down, since we left the EU, with one analysis suggesting net annual migration figures published next week could see a rise to 700,000 or even 1 million. Turns out Britain needs migrants - but now they have to come from far away, rather than in reciprocal movement between us and our nearest neighbours.

Given all this, what are the Brexiters to do? Some still deny reality altogether, insisting that we should disbelieve the evidence of our own eyes. The rest admit that Brexit has failed, and then face one of two options. Either they can atone for their role in visiting this calamity upon the nation and move to correct it. Or they can blame others for not doing it right.

On Newsnight, Farage made the latter choice. Yes, it was true that Britain had "not actually benefited from Brexit economically" but that was because "useless" politicians had "mismanaged this totally". It's the manoeuvre perfected in an earlier era by western communists confronted by the brute realities of the Soviet Union: nothing wrong with the communist idea, they insisted, it just hadn't been implemented properly.

But that logic is tricky for the Brexiters, because it's they who have been in charge. The exit deal was signed, sealed and pushed through parliament by one of their own, Boris Johnson, and a conviction Brexiter is in Downing Street now, in the form of Rishi Sunak. So there has to be someone else to blame, other shadowy forces who betrayed the cause.

Some point to Sunak himself, aided by Kemi Badenoch, who this month halted the planned shredding of thousands of EU-tainted regulations. For others, it's the Blob or the "remoaner elite", made up of the civil service, the BBC, the universities, the unions: anyone who, along with desperate refugees in small boats, can be blamed for standing between Britain and the promised Brexit nirvana.

This is hardly a new dynamic. Nationalism, with its impossible promise of a perfect future, always has to have a traitor to blame for perfection's delayed arrival. That is the process we are witnessing now: the steady nurturing of a stab-in-the-back myth for Brexit. History suggests that this hunt for the wielder of the treacherous dagger will only get nastier.

Which is why many were rightly alarmed by this week's gathering in the name of "national conservatism", where the writer Douglas Murray declared that nationalism need no longer hide its face just because the Germans had "mucked up" in the last century - a novel way to describe the murderous record of national socialism. That conference was a three-day search for those whose betrayal could be blamed for the failure of the Brexit project.

The quest will intensify as the damage caused by Brexit piles up. The worse the economy gets, the higher interest rates rise, the tighter incomes are squeezed, the louder and more vitriolic the attacks on the supposed true culprits will have to be - if only to quieten the obvious thought: namely that it is Brexit itself that is to blame.

It means those who opposed this madness from the start now have two reasons to break the understandable, if still bizarre, omertà on Brexit that prevails in Westminster. The first is the need to point to the source of our national ailing: if the patient is losing blood, you cannot keep ignoring the wounds where he shot himself in both feet. Less obvious, but no less urgent, is the need to acknowledge that Brexit's failure is injecting a new toxin into the system, one that will spread, the more apparent that failure becomes - and spread faster if we refuse to name its actual cause.

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'Comment is free… but facts are sacred' CP Scott

**G7**

## The west must convince the rest for Zelenskiy's shuttle diplomacy to work

Volodymyr Zelenskiy's shuttle diplomacy to marginalise Moscow is a necessary step to convince nations with longstanding Russian relationships that there are superior deals on offer. The moral case against Russia is unambiguous. Vladimir Putin has blood on his hands. This argument is better coming from President Zelenskiy than his backers in the west, whose actions from Vietnam to Iraq reveal a spotty record on matters of morality in foreign policy. His pitch will be that Ukraine will be on the right side of history: as a victim of imperialism but an eventual victor against aggression.

It would be unthinkable for western leaders to endorse the Arab League's shameful decision to welcome Syria's tyrant Bashar al-Assad back into its fold. Mr Zelenskiy is attending the Jeddah meeting despite Moscow's backing of Mr Assad's brutal suppression of a pro-democracy uprising. The Ukrainian president is not seeking the Syrian president's approval. He has made a pragmatic decision: to win over other leaders who have remained largely neutral on Russia's invasion, he will need to accept their norms rather than condemn them. This leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. But the bigger prize would be tangible support beyond the west for Kyiv ahead of its military counteroffensive.

History has often been enlisted in the service of politics. At the G7 meeting of industrialised countries, Joe Biden became the second sitting US president to visit Hiroshima's Peace Memorial, built on what remains of the only building to survive the first US atomic bombing in 1945. To this day, controversy has raged about whether dropping this weapon on Japan was necessary to end the second world war quickly. But it will be the Ukrainian president's arrival that will be steeped in symbolism after Mr Putin last year raised the threat of a nuclear response to anyone who tried to "stand in" Russia's way.

To avoid a direct confrontation between Nato and Russia, the Biden administration initially limited military aid to Ukraine to "defensive weapons". However, Russia's gains on the battlefield have led to cruise missiles and tanks being delivered. New sanctions to starve Russia's war machine will help too. Chinese bellicosity in the Indo-Pacific will also be under discussion at the G7. The importance of the global south in containing the partnership between Moscow and Beijing means some of the world's biggest non-aligned powers - Brazil, India and Indonesia - have been invited to Hiroshima along with Mr Zelenskiy. These nations have continued or even increased trading with Russia.

The growing divide between Beijing, Moscow and the G7 has provided such countries with an opportunity to negotiate sweeter deals from the west. Their gamble appears to be paying off. This week the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said that Europe "can't take for granted" that Latin America, Africa and the Indo-Pacific are on its side, and must demonstrate support for their development needs. But roughly half the economic heft in the G7 comes from the US and there have been few carrots on offer from Washington. The former Indian diplomat Shivshankar Menon argued earlier this year that "alienated and resentful, many developing countries see the war in Ukraine and the west's rivalry with China as distracting from urgent issues such as debt, climate change, and the effects of the pandemic". The west's pre-eminence is at risk if it cannot set a compelling agenda that others are willing to follow.

**Film**

## Hollywood's striking writers fight for a future where people still matter

Striking Hollywood writers who have thrown the US entertainment industry into turmoil will put down their picket placards for one night next month to allow Broadway's theatre community its moment in the sun. Under an agreement reached this week with the Writers Guild of America (WGA), the Tony awards will be broadcast. But failing a settlement in the interim, the event is expected to go ahead without a formal introduction or any scripted patter to join up the razzle-dazzle of acceptance speeches and musical numbers.

The union's beef is with Hollywood film studios, not New York theatres. But in an unintended consequence, one of Broadway's biggest stars, Lin-Manuel Miranda - whose musical Hamilton won 11 Tonys in 2016 - withdrew from delivering the introduction in solidarity with his fellow writers. That may ring bells for UK football fans, who recently watched matches shorn of commentary due to Gary Lineker's standoff with the BBC.

The strike has pitted the union's 11,500 screenwriters against Hollywood giants old and new, ranging from Paramount and Walt Disney, to Netflix and Amazon. Earlier this year, the WGA released data revealing that the median weekly pay for writer-producers had declined by 23% over the last decade when adjusted for inflation, while studio profits had soared by 39%.

Though its British counterpart, the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, is not directly involved in the action, it has advised its members to abide by the boycott of writing under US contracts if they want to work in Hollywood again. The Society of Authors has also pledged its support.

The WGA wields a power far greater than the size of its membership would suggest. A 100-day strike in 2007 is estimated to have cost the California economy $2.1bn (£1.7bn) in lost productions and belt-tightening by writers, actors and producers.

Its current action is a battle for a share in a future that is being carved up by big corporations. Though productions contracted in Europe and Britain are not affected - fans of Doctor Who and Peaky Blinders can rest assured that filming is going ahead - the outcome of the strike will be noted wherever there are film and television industries. The WGA is right to say that writers face "an existential threat": the push towards casualisation, and the resulting erosion of rights and incomes that was already hitting all but the starry few, is now being accelerated by the arrival of AI.

This is not only a problem for writers themselves, but for anyone involved in a global industry that is in a febrile state of health anyway. After an unexpected post-pandemic rally last year, the UK's film and television industry has been knocked back by a perfect storm of falling advertising revenues, the chilling effect of the BBC licence fee freeze and general inflation. So dire is the impact on the amount of work available that the UK's Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union has declared a state of emergency affecting many of its 40,000 members.

The WGA's decision not to picket the Tony awards is a recognition that Broadway theatre is itself struggling to get back to full health and needs the shot in the arm that a glamorous televised event will deliver. It is not the act of an irresponsible workforce bent on inflicting damage on its industry, but of a realistic one determined to do what it takes to survive.



PHOTOGRAPH: TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS

# Pity MPs who hate the London bubble but can't bear to leave it

**Marina Hyde**



Britain increasingly feels like a terribly old country. We keep hearing its pipework hasn't been properly overhauled since the Victorian age, so its own sewage laps at its shores and courses through its rivers. Earlier this month we crowned our oldest ever new monarch, a man who looked a picture of melancholy pretty much throughout, even if media sycophancy made it verboten to categorise the mood as anything other than joyous renewal. The country is overwhelmingly governed in the interests of older voters at the expense of young people. And this week, the latest update on the literally crumbling Houses of Parliament warned that the building is so comprehensively knackered it could be destroyed before renovation is agreed upon, let alone begun. This would be the only conceivable occasion on which this cohort of politicians could be described as bringing the house down.

Even the sewage crisis has been folded into the nostalgia myths that some find more comfortable than dealing with the present. "I remember as a child in south Wales swimming in sewage," reminisced the Conservative MP Damian Green this week. "Jackson's Bay in Barry used to be a sewage outlet where we all went and paddled and swam …"

But the Palace of Westminster situation is arguably the standout, for those who like their metaphors so heavy-handed as to beat them senseless. The building from which this country is governed is on the point of various collapses and existential crises, but no one can really face dealing with them. Stop me if it's all getting too excessively symbolic for you, but the Houses of Parliament have been in grave decline for decades, with dangerous wiring and endless leaks and asbestos discoveries now resulting in 4,000 maintenance issues reported every week.

Even tentative decisions on how to properly renovate are either procrastinated over or overturned. Last-chance moments have come and gone without action, successive generations of MPs paralysed by indecision. Things are now so bad that it's almost as if the MPs who hold the building's future in their hands have given up trying to fix its problems.

✻ **Guardian Live**
*In June, Marina Hyde will join fellow columnists at three events in London (1st), Leeds (7th) and Brighton (13th). Book tickets at membership.theguardian.com*

> **Why do our lawmakers not think that a breath of fresh air outside the M25 might be in order for them too?**

But this mismanaged decline is not cheap – as confirmed by the recent public accounts committee report, we are currently forking out a stunning £2m a week – A WEEK! – just on patching the Houses of Parliament up in the short term. All measures are only temporary. There is a long-held sense that the serious multibillion-pound investment required for the building would upset the shareholders (the British public). There is no plan for what to do, so nothing gets done. Many have given up thinking a plan will ever come, so simply wait fatalistically for disaster.

Those who have faced up to the problem know that the optimal solution at this advanced stage of decay is for absolutely all MPs, peers and staff to move out and go somewhere else so that full-scale renovation can be carried out in the round and comprehensively. Various solutions have been suggested, from parliament sitting in temporary digs in London to relocating to another city for several years. Supporters of destinations outside the M25 argue that they would represent a breath of fresh air for our legislators, a chance to reconnect with the provinces they keep telling us have been neglected.

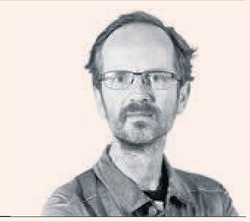
How odd, then, to find so few such supporters among those who cheerfully force other institutions to relocate all the time – namely, the "levelling up" fans of the current government. Channel 4 is now headquartered in Leeds, for instance, while the Arts Council has been ordered by the government to move more of its spending out of London, resulting in the body telling the English National Opera that it needed to leave the capital or lose all public funding. The powers-that-be seem to think that moving out of London is very good for you if you are a cultural institution – just the bracing shock to the system these London-bound elites could do with.

For the powers-that-be *themselves*, however, such a move is not proposed. But why? Why, when we have had to listen to all kinds of valid and not-so-valid criticism of the London metropolitan elite, do an extremely significant part of that elite – the lawmakers themselves – not think a breath of fresh air may be in order for them too? In fact, why was the navel-gazing and only occasionally coherent NatCon conference this week not preoccupied with this totemic idea? Given that Suella Braverman spent quite so much of her speech railing against experts and elites, surely the queen of the NatCons might reasonably have suggested a Khmer Rouge-lite emptying of the cities of the likes of herself. If they hate the Westminster bubble so much, why don't they burst it?

The answer, of course, is that they don't want to. At best, the ruling powers lack the skills and drive to do anything but keep patching up the past. At worst, they see the dysfunction as an opportunity for exploitation. Forgive me chucking this detail in again, just as a serial attempt to keep it on the boil, but at last count, almost 60 MPs were being investigated for sexual misconduct, while several already exposed still sit as MPs. That single statistic should be permanently enraging. Instead, it feels of a piece with wider decay. A rotten building houses a rotten culture that – unsurprisingly, really – is allowing the country itself to rot in all kinds of avoidable ways.

# The rightwing jamboree: a house of doom and gloom

**Andy Beckett**



For anyone who has grown up with the idea that the right dominates Britain, it can be a shock to discover that its members are often anxious or even downright miserable. Much of this week's National Conservatism conference in London - seen by some on the left as a gathering of immensely powerful and sinister forces - was actually very gloomy.

Over three long days in a chilly church conference centre in Westminster, I encountered a rightwing movement that often seemed frustrated, divided and angry - and pessimistic, even apocalyptic, about the right's prospects. Despite 13 years of Tory government, it was widely agreed that the climate for conservatism had not got better but worse.

"Transgenderism", "climate catastrophism", "the liberal establishment", "neo-Marxism", "wokeism", "the professoriat", "globalists", "big corporates", "big tech", "collectivist" politicians and civil servants, "elites", "quangos" and "progressivism - the dominant ideology of our times": all these forces were said to be creating what was variously described as "an age of unreason", a "new dark age" and even "the end of our way of life". The bleaker the speaker, the louder the applause generally was.

Conservatism always has a pessimistic side: warning against change, and making bleak assumptions about human nature and the practicality of a fairer world. Conservatism is also good at conjuring up bogeymen while shamelessly playing down its own power. The conference featured Britain's home secretary, the levelling up secretary, several influential Tory MPs, the Conservative deputy chairman and lots of well known commentators from the rightwing press (the huge impact of which was never mentioned). But several speakers still claimed that it was a "counterculture" gathering. Those who remember the hippy squats and police harassment of the original counterculture may find that term hard to apply to several hundred well connected suits listening to cabinet ministers and exchanging business cards afterwards.

And yet the dark mood felt real. The Conservatives' terrible performance in the local elections and opinion polls hung over proceedings. The political scientist Matthew Goodwin said the party was in a "prolonged death spiral". Onstage, and in conversations I had with participants, almost everyone assumed the Tories would lose the next election. As during the last years of Conservative rule in the mid-1990s, there was the sense of a privileged tribe preparing for harder times.

Unlike the listless Toryism of the John Major years, however, there was also an expectation that defeat would bring opportunities. National conservatism is not the same as Conservatism, in the British party sense, but a loose concept and movement imported from the US, where the right is more confident, more confrontational and more authoritarian.

A few things unite the movement: fury against liberals, extreme reverence for tradition, horror at "uncontrolled immigration", and an apparent readiness to impose conservative, often Christian, values on others. "The normative family, the mother and father sticking together for the sake of the children, is the only basis for a safe and functioning society," the conference was told by MP Danny Kruger.

Yet the ambiguity of the phrase "national conservatism" also allows it to be interpreted in different ways. And thus the movement has become a vehicle for many of the factions competing to transform the right in Britain and beyond.

National can mean nationalist. Despite even Nigel Farage admitting this week that leaving the EU had "failed" to benefit Britain, Brexit was presented at the conference as a triumph. National can mean for the whole nation: some speakers argued that the Tories should better represent all of Britain. National can mean more state-driven: other speakers said the government should get more involved in the economy, and in financially supporting child-rearing and marriage.

National could also mean national in the infamous 1930s sense. Conference participants reacted with outrage at being called "fascists" on social media. But there was also praise from the stage and in publications available in a busy side room for the authoritarian governments of Hungary, India, Israel and Singapore. In her brazenly self-serving speech, the home secretary, Suella Braverman, said, with ominous emphasis: "Conservatism is order or it is nothing."

> **"Progressive forces were said to be creating a 'new dark age'. Yet the bleaker the speaker, the louder the applause**

The National Conservatism logo, with the first word in heavy orange capitals and the second in flimsier white ones, against a Tory blue background, could easily be a logo for a new political party - perhaps a reshaping of Toryism akin to New Labour, or something more revolutionary.

Some of the conference speakers most critical of the Conservatives' supposed timidity in office dressed with a camera-ready smartness that suggested Commons careers on the horizon. Goodwin declared that one way to revive the Tories would be to "replace the dominant faction". Another slick academic analyst and advocate of rightwing populism, Eric Kaufmann, said that Tory MPs "must be converted" to national conservatism, "or they must be selected out".

At other times, though, the conference presented a less united front. While some contributors still insisted that the free market was an essentially perfect economic system, others argued that the right should abandon it, because it did so much social damage. Unusually for a rightwing gathering, Thatcherism was sometimes described as a philosophy whose time had passed. Although, given that her premiership ended in a recession and acrimony 33 years ago, we might ask her new rightwing critics: what took you so long?

In Britain at least, national conservatism could fizzle out. Most politicians and voters may decide it is too extreme and strident, its worldview too sour and old-fashioned. A lack of fresh policy proposals, apparent at the conference, may also hurt the movement.

Or it may be overtaken by events. The UK's next prime minister may well be a Labour one whose keywords are patriotism, the family and security - in other words, a milder, more egalitarian, more palatable kind of traditionalist than national conservatism offers. Yet at the conference I never heard Keir Starmer mentioned. Even the self-styled truth-tellers of the British right may be in denial about what the future holds.



*Audience members at the National Conservatism conference in Westminster on Monday* PHOTOGRAPH: TOM NICHOLSON/SHUTTERSTOCK




# Modern dads are more than ‘doesbands’

**Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett**



Are you a “doesband”? The latest irritating portmanteau refers to a husband who parents his own children. “A doesband has his own hectic job, but still does his fair share at home Without Being Asked,” writes Harriet Walker, the Times journalist who coined the term. “A doesband knows where the Calpol is and when ballet kit is needed … He gets up with the children and does bedtime; he feeds them, bathes them, does the school run; knows when their nails need to be cut and that behind their ears can get gunky.”

I hate the term, but Walker makes a salient point: that men who share childcare equally with their partners, including the mental load, are still rarer than they should be. There are more and more female breadwinners, but according to the Office for National Statistics, women still do 60% more unpaid work than men. Walker writes about staying awkwardly silent during conversations with other women about their useless partners. It can feel like boasting to go into just how much your male partner does (I’m only discussing heterosexual relationships here).

Since having a baby, I’ve been depressed by how little some men seem to get away with doing when it comes to their own children, and how normalised that is. Take the loathsome phrase “Daddy daycare”, or the fact that my husband is frequently congratulated for taking his own son out for a walk - something that has literally never happened to me. I feel lucky to have a partner who took five months of shared parental and annual leave, who feeds (we combi-fed, which set the tone from the start), changes, comforts, plays, cooks, shops, sorts the childcare payments, night-weaned the baby and - the worst task of all - deals with the nappy bins. Yet I shouldn’t feel lucky, it should be normal.

On the bright side, lots more men are what used to be called “involved fathers”, while also trying to hold down full-time work. Seeing how challenging that can be has made me reflect how, in our capitalist system, men can’t have it all either. For many, being able to work from home since the start of the pandemic has been a gamechanger. “I don’t think women are inherently better caregivers than men,” says Alex Marsh, a 39-year-old market researcher with two daughters, aged nine and 12. He tells me that he has always strived to do his share, remembering how the midwife “wrote ‘hands-on dad’ on her notes, as though that was remarkable” when he and his wife said they shared the nappy-changing. Alex was the “night duty” parent, but was still working in London all week.

✻
**Republic of Parenthood**
*A series exploring some of the philosophical, political and cultural issues around modern parenthood*

Now that he only goes into the office twice a week, he is able to read his kids bedtime stories every night, cook most of their meals and handle their school admin. “And I love it,” he says. Alex says he doesn’t feel that exceptional among his peers, except maybe in terms of the cooking, but he worries that they are a minority. “There are still a lot of relationships out there where the woman is expected to do more, simply because she is a woman.”

A friend who works in tech, a similarly hands-on dad, doesn’t feel rare either. He finds the term “doesband” infantilising. He’s messaging me back at 3.05am while trying to settle his toddler daughter and says the majority of fathers he knows are equal parents. In his industry, it’s considered commonplace: he got four months of paid paternity leave.

“I still notice a huge generational legacy in behaviour,” he says. His grandparents and parents have been surprised by how dedicated he and his partner are to parenting equally. That’s not to say it’s easy. “There’s no getting around that it’s draining and runs you into the ground,” he says. “In the early stages there’s anger and frustration.” His talk of the early stages makes me think that perhaps some couples succeed at equal parenting right off the bat, while others negotiate and learn as they go.

Some of us may move in circles where equal parenting is the norm, but the stats tell a different story. There is cause for hope, though. While hands-on dads have always existed, they are becoming more commonplace among younger generations of parents, and policy - especially in terms of paternity leave - needs to catch up. Women seem less inclined to put up with an unfair division of labour and a heavy mental load, which is sexist and in many cases no longer makes financial sense. As for the term “doesband”, it can get in the bin with the nappies.

# Letters

## Flaws in Hytner's plan to save performing arts

I read Nicholas Hytner's article with interest (Arts funding is broken. Sport's model can fix it, 17 May). As someone who founded and runs a disability arts organisation working everywhere from Zoom to the Barbican, it is clear to me that some of the most exciting and innovative art comes from what he might call "community" and "non-professional" arts, not from what he described as the "top end". While sports are reasonably objective and have a clear pathway of progression, the arts and cultural sector cannot simply be stratified, without risking ossifying. It is only through bringing together creative communities of people committed to the arts - whether through professional training, personal development, or any combination - that we'll be able to really have the "best possible art".

Separating off the art created by those people fortunate enough to have been able to develop potential careers as "professional artists" will set the diversity of the sector back enormously, returning it more and more to those people who have had the privilege - often formed through financial security - to make their way in an uncertain sector. Hytner is right that we need to save the arts - and certainly right that we need to be investing in arts education - but rather than separating community and professional work, we need to be uniting them.

**Jamie Hale**
*Founder and artistic director, CRIPtic Arts*

> **Some of the most innovative art comes from 'community' and 'non-professional' arts, not from the 'top end'**
>
> **Jamie Hale**

● Can I add a further suggestion to Nicholas Hytner's excellent plan for saving the performing arts? I strongly agree that we need two arts funding bodies equivalent to UK Sport and Sport England - one to support professional work and the other to encourage amateur arts. However, if this wholly sensible policy were to be adopted, we would need to ensure that it was linked to its corollary: investing in educational initiatives to create an appetite for the arts and ensure the existence of audiences in the future.

It will take a change of government to bring Hytner's proposal to life. Some years ago, when Jeremy Hunt was shadow secretary of state at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, at his request I discussed funding the arts with him and said that it seemed shortsighted not to give more support. "I absolutely agree," he said. I suggested that his department should collaborate with the Department for Education in developing a strategy for encouraging future audiences. "Let me call Michael," he said. Michael Gove responded to his summons and I told him that I thought it would be shortsighted to fund the arts without funding education in the arts. "I absolutely agree," he said.

**Richard Eyre**
*London*

● Nicholas Hytner's suggestion that Arts Council England (ACE) is replaced by a two-tier system is as flawed as the present system.

The problems facing the arts in the UK are deeper and wider than just dance, opera and classical music. ACE has abrogated its responsibility for the arts in favour of a flawed funding system and operational plan. Audiences are ignored and the strategic plan Let's Create appears to overlook the arts completely, with an emphasis on filling the chasm left by the government's erosion of arts education in schools.

ACE has no art form policies that inform funding decisions. It is crucial that art form policies and an action plan are devised. The treatment of English National Opera is a case in point. ACE withdraws ENO's national portfolio funding and then agrees to fund ENO for three years with £35.5m of lottery funding. This, they say, is part of levelling up - another oxymoron with no discernible policy or costed action plan.

A freedom of information inquiry revealed that lottery expenditure was £448.53m in 2022-23, committed to paying out grants to national portfolio organisations for the next three years. It is scandalous that lottery monies should be used in this way instead of funding touring, artistic projects and supporting the work of artists.

It is time for a rigorous examination of ACE by the National Audit Office in terms of its business plan, use of lottery funds and disbursement of its government grants. Heads should roll at ACE.

**Chris Hodgkins**
*Ealing, London*

## The silent sentinels

*'These trees in Lake Kariba, Zimbabwe, are more than 60 years old, having been 'drowned' during the creation of the lake, the world's largest man-made reservoir. The birds in silhouette serve to enhance a captivating scene.'*

NILESH TRIVEDI/ GUARDIAN COMMUNITY

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## Access to personal information must be properly monitored

I was saddened to read your piece (NHS privacy fear after doctor shares records, 15 May). When I moved to the UK from South Africa as a single, young woman, my application for a national insurance number was copied by the clerk who handled my forms. He had my work and home address and telephone numbers in the UK, and knew from the intake interview that I moved to London by myself and knew no one. This was the mid-1990s, before email and mobile phones were widespread, and moving abroad alone was a big deal.

He started to call me at work and at home, and soon his behaviour escalated, with him turning up at work and outside my house at all hours. Stalking was not a crime at the time and the police refused to act. I ended up confronting him in a pub, flanked by two newfound friends, and the bouncer came to my rescue when I poured a beer over him. Luckily this was the end of my ordeal, but I have often wondered how many women he preyed on.

It saddens me to learn that potentially vulnerable people (children in the asylum process, anyone with NHS records) are still at risk of this kind of abuse. Thankfully, stalking is now a crime, but how many people - especially those less able to advocate for themselves - are still facing abuse or just fall through the cracks as "missing persons"?

In an age when our data increasingly amounts to our lives, we have to take better care of who can access what. I am sure this is the tip of the iceberg.

**Madelein Smit**
*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

● I am an out-of-hours GP and I am, of course, appalled by this report. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that malicious use can never be made of NHS records, and at the same time ensure that adequate access is available when urgently needed.

But such malicious use is unforgivable, and will cause extensive harm to other patients and colleagues in the health service too. In my view, there is only one acceptable disciplinary action for the doctor concerned, and that is permanent erasure from the medical register.

**Dr Mary Gibbs**
*Manchester*

## Study live juries to improve rape trials

Nicola Sturgeon argues that we should remain open-minded about the Scottish government's pilot for juryless rape trials (An issue that must transcend party politics, 16 May). In my view, the government itself has not been open-minded enough. The premise behind juryless rape trials is that juries are declining to convict because they believe rape myths. However, the research supporting this claim was not conducted on real juries. Since studying live juries is illegal, researchers have to make do with second-best evidence - paying people to take part in make-believe trials involving actors. These "mock trials" have no real-world importance and so we shouldn't blindly trust that people act the same in real-life cases.

A truly open-minded approach would end the ban on studying live juries. Letting researchers study real juries as they make decisions would allow our policymaking to be guided by scientific evidence. Forbidding research on live juries is a familiar conservative orthodoxy. But the importance of the debate about the justice deficit in sexual assault trials demands fresh thinking.

**Dr Lewis Ross**
*London School of Economics*

● Victims of rape have been let down for decades, and I'm with Nicola Sturgeon: a carefully designed pilot scheme of judge-only rape trials, informed by research that found "overwhelming evidence" of juries and their verdicts being influenced by rape myths, makes perfect sense.

One of the likely benefits of a juryless trial is that an experienced judge will be better equipped than inexperienced members of the public to resist rape myths, and less susceptible to the sophistry of barristers who employ them.

**Pete Stockwell**
*London*

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## A cracking price for supermarket eggs?

Your article (We're going on an egg hunt…, 18 May) wrongly includes Waitrose in a list of supermarkets that don't pay egg farmers a price that reflects their costs. We most certainly do. The cost of feed is the biggest element of volatility in farmers' costs and we update our farm-gate egg price each quarter to reflect this.

Over the last year feed prices have risen so rapidly that we've increased the price we pay even more frequently to make sure farmers are being paid fairly.

It's no coincidence that our farmers have confidence to keep farming and we've had no interruptions to our supply.

The fact that our competitors have had shortages and resorted to foreign imports is a sure sign that the hens have come home to roost. We aren't cocky – but when it comes to supporting farmers we do like to think we are high up the pecking order.

**Jake Pickering**
*Senior agriculture manager, Waitrose*

● The obvious lesson from your article is surely don't buy your eggs from a supermarket. Indeed, don't buy anything from a supermarket; their policies are unsustainable, economically and ethically. We should not use them, but instead support our nearest independent trader in eggs direct from the farm. Until more of us make this change in mindset, our homegrown supply of food will continue to be put at risk by the greed of the supermarkets.

**Mark Doel**
*Sheffield*

● Why did eggs get so expensive? Simple. Two years ago, two sacks of feed (layers pellets, mixed corn) cost £20; today they cost at least £35. I suspect the increase is the same whether you keep a dozen birds or a thousand.

**Wal Callaby**
*Whatfield, Suffolk*

## Let's hear it for this audiobooks charity

Your article (Audiobooks: How to listen for less – or even for free, 13 May) missed out the charity Calibre Audio, which provides audiobooks for free if you have sight loss, dyslexia or other conditions, such as Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis, that might make reading difficult. They have over 15,000 books, including for all the key stages for children. Each year they add to their collection with both commercial and their own recordings.

They also run book groups, both in person and via the telephone. The actor Terrence Hardiman, (Obituary, 11 May) was a volunteer narrator for Calibre over many years and recorded at least 192 books for them. As a volunteer checker, I miss his professionalism, knowing that I could enjoy the book as he rarely made mistakes. He is sadly missed.

**Priscilla Church**
*Church Stretton, Shropshire*

## Corrections and clarifications

**● There are no "spaces for metal detecting" at the Arnside and Silverdale area of outstanding natural beauty in Lancashire (permission must be granted by landowners), nor are lady's-slipper orchids still found there (From kiss me quick to seaside serenity, 6 May, Saturday magazine, p76).**

**● A recipe for strata with tomatoes and capers referenced the "remaining" onion and bacon mixture instead of just the onion and bacon mixture. It also said to take the dish out of the fridge an hour before serving instead of 75 minutes before (13 May, Feast, p2).**

**● A TV licence is not needed to listen to BBC Sounds (How to get audiobooks at no cost, 13 May, p50).**

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com or The readers' editor, **Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU**. You can also leave a voicemail on **020 3353 4736**

## Cancel culture and the Oxford Union

So the Oxford Union is now under pressure from the cancel culture (Academics accuse Oxford student union of using threats to stop debate, 18 May). I recall a Union debate in the early 60s when one of the speakers was Oswald Mosley. He was given a pretty rough ride. But the idea that we might have been forbidden to hear and debate his views would have been unthinkable.

**John Prescott Thomas**
*Bristol*

● I read the paper at breakfast time on Wednesday and sent off my email about Dorothy's dog (Letters, 18 May) just after 8am. Then I did the quick crossword at lunchtime – and the clue for 10 across was "Dorothy's dog". How weird is that!

**Pam Fraser**
*Cumnor, Oxfordshire*

● I took my first Guardians (Letters, 9 May) when I was in the sixth form in 1949. I paid for them by selling water snails to the local aquarium shop for 3d (they retailed at 6d). Now I'm 90 and read it online.

**Anthony Wilson**
*Lichfield*

● The rewilding craze set off by the Chelsea flower show has gone too far. At my church fete last weekend the plant stall sold sycamore seedlings.

**Liz Budd**
*Cambridge*

● The Tory eccentrics who rabbit on about Marxists (Report, 17 May) should be asked when they last met one. I suspect they are too young.

**Geoff Reid**
*Bradford*

Established 2021

## Young country diary

### *Central London*

**A very successful garden hunt!**
We share our garden with snails, slugs and ants. My mum has recorded incredible adventures of following the chomped plants and the trail of slime. Fascinated by her stories, I asked if I could go on a slug hunt myself. She was completely in favour of it.

My first find was an earthworm, accidentally dug up. It was trying to burrow back into the ground. Next, I moved a compost bag. Unfortunately, an ant colony was there and was now frantic, crawling and picking up their larvae. This was extremely interesting as I'd never seen a colony up close before.

Soon after, I found my first molluscs: three black slugs were there on the ground. I could just see their tiny eyes on their tentacles. Then, I was shown a pile of leaves that had fallen on the ground into a heap – the perfect "bug hotel"! And finally: a white slug. They can be real pests. They're apparently blind and eat earthworms. They burrow under the soil and rarely, at night, come up. The worm I found earlier clearly has quite a few predators.

**Julia, 12**

### *Sheffield*

**Holding out for Steve and Stevetta**
Our garden is a tiny patch of green in the urban landscape around. Most gardens up and down our street are paved and walled, an uninviting sight for any wildlife. But wildlife does come to us. The thick ivy hedge at the bottom of our garden is home to two feathered visitors every year. The blackbirds, who we have named Steve and Stevetta, arrive in early spring to gorge on fallen crab apples and start nest-building.

This year we found an old nest; it astonished me that an animal that's so small with no hands could make anything so intricate and beautiful. Each piece of grass was carefully tucked in and nothing was out of place.

This spring in the garden there have been frogs and newts in our pond, and we have just heard the first swifts screaming above the chimney pots. We have seen Steve and Stevetta since the start of April, fluttering around the hedge. They haven't built a nest yet, but I hope that our tiny terrace garden can be a reliable habitat for them every year.

**Mabel, 12**

**Young country diary, written by children aged between eight and 14, appears in this column on the third Saturday of each month**

# Gerald Rose

## Illustrator who drew from the landscapes of his childhood in east Asia

The illustrator Gerald Rose, who has died aged 87, was the youngest winner of the Kate Greenaway medal for children's book illustration, in 1960. Then still in his mid-20s and barely out of art school, he would go on, often in partnership with his wife, Elizabeth, a writer, to become an influential artist in the field of children's picture books. His painterly, playful and gently anarchic artwork continues to be enjoyed around the world.

The Greenaway medal (now renamed the Carnegie medal) was awarded for Rose's illustrations to Old Winkle and the Seagulls. Written by Elizabeth and published by Faber, the book exemplifies Rose's graphic ebullience and flair. It also embodies one of his recurrent themes and motifs, the coastal town (in this case Lowestoft, Suffolk), reflecting his lifelong association with the sea.

Born in Hong Kong, Gerald was the son of Rachel (nee Law) and Henley Rose. His father was from Lowestoft, and served in the army in both the first and second world wars. He had enjoyed his time stationed in Hong Kong and decided to make it his home, entering the civil service.

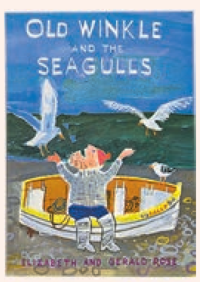
His mother, originally from a large family in Borneo (Gerald would joke that he was descended from Iban headhunters), was adopted by a missionary, who paid for her schooling at a convent and sent her to Hong Kong to finish her education. There she met and married Henley.

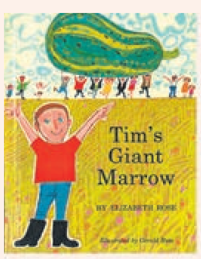
In late 1930s Hong Kong their two children, Gerald and his older sister, Dawn, enjoyed an idyllic early childhood, roaming freely around what were then wild spaces near the family home. Gerald recalled a dramatic encounter with a wild tiger, and the exotic flora and fauna of his childhood would form a regular theme in his work, most directly in his emotive autobiographical work, Tiger Dreams (1996).

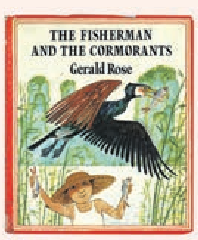
The childhood idyll was brutally curtailed when the Japanese swept into Hong Kong, and by 1942 the family was broken up. Gerald, Dawn and Rachel were taken to the Stanley internment camp for civilians while Henley was interned at a military camp. They were there for four years, living on bowls of congee often full of maggots. Rachel died there of tuberculosis.

> **The idyll was curtailed when the Japanese swept into Hong Kong, and by 1942 the family was broken up and interned**






On their release, the children were sent to live in Lowestoft with Henley's mother. Henley remained in Hong Kong, returning to Suffolk as Gerald was leaving school. Gerald had failed his 11-plus and had gained no qualifications at secondary modern. As Henley took a keen interest in art, he took Gerald to see an exhibition of cartoons in London, where a woman, overhearing the boy's enthusiastic interest, recommended he consider art school. Gerald liked the idea and began a drawing class, before enrolling full-time at Lowestoft





*Main, a bittersweet moment from The Tiger Skin Rug. Above right, Jabberwocky and Other Poems. Right, Tiger Dreams. Left, some of Rose's many books*



*Rose pictured in 1953, before he won a scholarship to study art*

College of Art, where he met Elizabeth Pretty, a fellow student.

He won a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy Schools in 1955. Elizabeth joined him in London to work as a teacher, and the two married later that year. Gerald was spending his days painting from the model at the RA, but he also took a keen interest in the children's books Elizabeth would bring home.

Their first book, How St Francis Tamed the Wolf, was published by Faber in 1958. One of Gerald's RA tutors noticed a copy in the window of Hatchards book shop across the road and made a gently disapproving comment about commercial art. Now with a young child, the couple found money was tight, but with Wuffles Goes to Town, published as Gerald was graduating in 1959, and the Greenaway success following, he successfully applied for a teaching post at Blackpool College of Art.

In 1965, and now with three children, the family moved to Kent, where Gerald was appointed to teach at Maidstone College of Art under the then principal, the prolific illustrator William Stobbs. There he developed the successful BA illustration programme, which he led until 1987. Throughout his teaching career, and beyond, Gerald remained productive as an illustrator and continued to paint, though seldom for commercial sale.

As well as the books with Elizabeth, Gerald illustrated the work of many other authors, including Ted Hughes's Nessie the Mannerless Monster (1964), James Joyce's The Cat and the Devil (1965), Paul Jennings' The Hopping Basket (1965) and The Great Jelly of London (1967), Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky and Other Poems (1968) and a number of Norman Hunter's Professor Branestawm titles (1981-83). His own later picturebooks included The Tiger Skin Rug (1979), about a tiger who pretends to be a rug for a more comfortable life in the Rajah's palace, and the award-winning Ahhh! Said Stork (1986).

Gerald and Elizabeth spent their later years living on the East Sussex coast at Hove.

Elizabeth died in 2020. Gerald is survived by their three children, Martin, Richard and Louise, seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and his sister, Dawn.

**Martin Salisbury**

*Gerald Rose, illustrator and teacher, born 27 July 1935; died 5 May 2023*

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# Andy Rourke

## Smiths' bassist with a distinctive melodic style that was central to their sound



*Rourke in 2009, the year he moved to New York, later becoming a DJ on East Village Radio. He continued to work with a range of well-known artists after the Smiths split*

Andy Rourke, who has died of pancreatic cancer aged 59, was a bass player with a distinctive melodic style. His musicianship was integral to the sound of the Smiths, the seminal Manchester band he played in from 1982 to 1987, along with the singer Morrissey, guitarist Johnny Marr and drummer Mike Joyce. Rourke's funky twangs were a key component of classic singles such as This Charming Man and William, It Was Really Nothing, not to mention much-loved album tracks such as There Is a Light That Never Goes Out and The Headmaster Ritual. "I tried to do a tune within a tune. I wanted it to stand up on its own," Rourke once said, pinpointing how his style proved a perfect foil for Marr's talents.

The pair first took up guitars at school in 1975, jamming during breaks. They took their friendship and musical kinship into the charts and on to Top of the Pops in the band which, in 2002, NME voted the "most influential of the last 50 years". Rourke played on all the Smiths' classic albums – The Smiths (1984), Meat Is Murder (1985), The Queen Is Dead (1986) and Strangeways Here We Come (1987) – as well as 24 singles and other key releases such as the compilation Hatful of Hollow (1984).

Born in Manchester, Rourke – the only member of the Smiths not of fully Irish descent – was one of four sons of an Irish father, Michael, an architect, and English mother, Mary (nee Stones). When he was seven, Rourke's parents bought him the acoustic guitar he was still playing when a fellow St Augustine's Catholic grammar schoolboy and Rolling Stones/Neil Young fan, Marr (then known as John Maher), suggested he try bass. Rourke learned by playing along to records such as David Bowie's Low. Mary abandoned the family to move to Mallorca when he was 11, and music (and cannabis) became Rourke's escape from a sometimes quarrelsome family environment.

Marr and Rourke formed Freak Party with the future Fall drummer Simon Wolstencroft, but the band proved short-lived. "I think we got too funky for Johnny, who wanted to go somewhere else," Rourke recalled when I interviewed him for the Guardian in 2012. Marr's "somewhere else" turned out to be meeting Morrissey and forming the Smiths. When the band's original bassist, Dale Hibbert, did not work out, Rourke was invited in.

With Joyce already on board as drummer, the first time they played together they recorded demos of Handsome Devil and Miserable Lie, tracks that subsequently became classics. Within a year they reached the Top 40 for the first time with their second single, the sublime This Charming Man (1983), which reached No 25, with Rourke's gloriously fluid bassline to the forefront. As more hits followed, the indie charts were flooded with soundalikes and the Smiths' trademark jangle inspired countless successors, including Blur, Oasis, Suede and Radiohead.

In 1986, Rourke was briefly sacked (by Morrissey) because of his heroin addiction, but he rejoined a fortnight later and played on Strangeways Here We Come, the final Smiths album before Marr quit the group. Rourke subsequently played on Morrissey solo releases including The Last of the Famous International Playboys and even co-wrote with the singer, but the various ex-Smiths' relations deteriorated as Rourke and Joyce commenced legal proceedings against their former bandmates over royalties. Rourke settled out of court and in 2006 he rejoined Marr onstage at the Manchester v Cancer concert, which the bassist had helped to organise.

Rourke's impact as a member of the Smiths overshadowed his other substantial contributions. He appeared on Sinéad O'Connor's classic 1990 album I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got, played with the Pretenders, Killing Joke and Ian Brown, toured with Badly Drawn Boy, formed Moondog One with ex-Oasis guitarist Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs and (between 2005 and 2010) was part of the three-bass-guitar band Freebass with Joy Division/New Order's Peter Hook and the Stone Roses' Gary "Mani" Mounfield. In 2016 he played in DARK, a band including the former Cranberries singer, Dolores O'Riordan.

In 2009 Rourke moved to New York, where he married Francesca Mor in 2012 and enjoyed a new life as a DJ on East Village Radio. In 2022 he unveiled another new band, Blitz Vega, and composed the music for the short film The Wrong Guy, directed by Alejandro Montoya Marín. Rourke's final performance was, appropriately enough, with Marr's band, when he joined them on stage in New York at Madison Square Garden in September 2022.

"I only wanted to play music," he once said. "Eventually the Smiths arrived. We knew we had something special. The rest is history."

He is survived by Francesca.

**Dave Simpson**

*Andrew Michael Rourke, musician and songwriter, born 17 January 1964; died 19 May 2023*



*Rourke, left, with his bandmates in the Smiths – Mike Joyce, Morrissey and Johnny Marr – performing live on the TV show The Tube in 1984*

PHOTOGRAPH: PETE CRONIN/ REDFERNS

## Birthdays

**Today's birthdays: Lynda Birke**, biologist, 75; **Sir Graham Brady**, Conservative MP and chairman of the 1922 Committee, 56; **Petr Čech**, footballer and ice-hockey player, 41; **Cher**, singer and actor, 77; **Anton Corbijn**, photographer and director, 68; **Greg Dyke**, former BBC director general and former chairman of the FA, 76; **Chris Froome**, cyclist, 38; **Annabel Giles**, TV presenter, 64; **Emma Johnson**, clarinettist, 57; **Daisy McAndrew**, broadcaster, 51; **José Mujica**, former president of Uruguay, 88; **Zbigniew Preisner**, composer, 68; **Dieter Rams**, industrial designer, 91; **Michèle Roberts**, novelist and poet, 74; **Earl Spencer**, writer and broadcaster, 59; **Louis Theroux**, broadcaster, 53; **Peter Unwin**, writer and diplomat, 91; **The Ven Sheila Watson**, former Archdeacon of Canterbury, 70.

**Tomorrow's birthdays: Geoffrey Archer**, thriller writer, 79; **Amy Callaghan**, SNP MP, 31; **Martin Carthy**, folk musician, 82; **Claire Cashmore**, swimmer and Paralympic gold medallist, 35; **Mark Cavendish**, cyclist, 38; **Michael Crick**, broadcaster and writer, 65; **Tom Daley**, diver, 29; **Nadine Dorries**, Conservative MP, 66; **Lisa Evans**, footballer, 31; **Noel Fielding**, actor and comedian, 50; **Drew Hendry**, SNP MP, 59; **Simon Hiscocks**, sailor, 50; **Heinz Holliger**, oboist, composer and conductor, 84; **Will Hutton**, journalist and former principal of Hertford College, Oxford, 73; **Jonathan Hyde**, actor, 75; **Ron Isley**, singer, 82; **Loretta Lynch**, former US attorney general, 64; **Denis MacShane**, writer, former Labour MP and minister, 75; **Dipak Nandy**, rights campaigner and founder, Runnymede Trust, 87; **Andrew Neil**, journalist and broadcaster, 74; **Hans Ulrich Obrist**, artistic director of the Serpentine Gallery, 55; **Rosalind Plowright**, soprano, 74; **Mary Robinson**, former president of Ireland, 79; **Leo Sayer**, singer, 75; **Lemn Sissay**, poet, author and broadcaster, 56; **Mr T (Laurence Tureaud)**, actor and wrestler, 71; **Edward Watson**, former principal dancer, Royal Ballet, 47; **Prof Sir Stanley Wells**, honorary president, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 93.

## Announcements

**Marriages**

**GROVES - TURNER**. Celebrating the wedding of Helen Groves and Paul Turner. We love you both.

For Announcements, Acknowledgments, Adoptions, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Births, Deaths, Engagements, Memorial Services and In Memoriam, email us at announcements@theguardian.com including your name, address and telephone number or phone 0203 353 2114.

# Obituaries

obituaries@theguardian.com
other.lives@theguardian.com
@guardianobits

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## Other lives



### Mike Peters

*Trumpeter on London's trad-jazz scene and photographer who documented the swinging 60s*

My father, the trad-jazz trumpeter Mike Peters, who has died aged 89, was renowned for telling gags on stage. One of his well-worn favourites when roll-calling the band was to refer to a band member as "the late [insert name here]" along with a story of their tardiness. Now he is himself "the late Mike Peters"; the memory of his funny one-liners, tall stories and entertaining musicianship will still raise a smile among family and friends.

Mike was born in Harrow, north-west London, the son of Francis, an ironmonger, and Natalie (nee Lazarus). He first fell in love with jazz and the trumpet at the age of 10. The object of his affection was the playing of the trumpeter Avery "Kid" Howard on the Climax Recordings with George Lewis and His New Orleans Stompers.

Some years later, while on national service in the 1950s with the Royal Army Pay Corps in Kure, Japan, Mike compared the city to New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz, but with one thing missing - the music. So he and his trumpet-playing buddy Barry Campbell formed the Kure City New Orleans jazz band.




*Hipsters at Eel Pie Island, a 60s beatnik and hippy haunt on the River Thames, photographed by Mike Peters*

On his return to Britain, Mike became a familiar face on the trad-jazz scene. He first joined Brian Wright's Magna Jazz Band, then spent time with Graham Stewart's New Orleans band, mostly playing tours and residencies in Germany, and back home with Terry Lightfoot and His Jazzmen. His own bands followed in several incarnations, including Mike Peters Florida Jazz Band, Mike Peters Jazzmen and more recently the self-deprecatingly named Mike Peters World Famous Jazz Band. Local to where Mike lived in Twickenham, south-west London, a regular venue for him to play was the Eel Pie Island hotel.

A professional photographer alongside his music work, Mike was in the perfect place to document the goings-on in the 1960s at the notorious beatnik and hippy haunt, where he photographed the biggest names in British trad jazz. He also captured images of all the "cool cats" witnessing the birth of R&B, including early gigs of the Rolling Stones.

> **A professional photographer alongside his music work, he captured images of all the 'cool cats' witnessing the birth of R&B**

He met Cy Mortimer-Griffin in Twickenham and they married in 1960. They lived together on the John and Mary, a converted Thames sailing barge at Strawberry Hill that was something of a party boat, filled with an ever-changing parade of musicians until their three children came along.

Mike continued playing regularly with his band until he had a stroke in 2010.

One of his favourite sayings was: "True story!" As a keen fisherman, he developed a talent for embellishing the facts. His tales were long and winding, always hilarious, somewhat fantastical and highly imaginative.

Mike and Cy divorced in 1984. He is survived by his partner, Ruth Davis, and by his children, Jacquie, John and me.
**Amanda McCormack**



### Alison McCleery

*Social sciences expert and professor of economic and cultural geography at Edinburgh Napier University*

My wife, Alison McCleery, who has died aged 69 of breast cancer, was a professor of economic and cultural geography, specialising in research on the economic, social and cultural development of the North Atlantic periphery.

Born and brought up in Edinburgh, Alison was the daughter of Margaret (nee Shillinglaw) and George Bruce. Her father, a teacher of French and German, was a keen amateur singer and musician, enthusiasms he passed on to his daughter. As a pupil at Mary Erskine school, Alison played the french horn in an orchestra conducted by Donald Runnicles and when she moved to St Andrews University in 1972, she played in the university orchestra and sang in the chapel choir. It was at St Andrews that she and I met, and two years after Alison graduated with a first-class degree in geography, we were married, in 1978.

After a PhD at Glasgow University, she became a senior researcher in the central research unit of the Scottish Development Department. In 1981 she switched to Edinburgh Napier University, where she was to remain for 40 years, first as a senior lecturer, then as a professor with a remit to enhance its research reputation.

Fluent in French and German, Alison was seconded from Napier to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and also to Insead in Paris. Elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, she served as editor of the Scottish Geographical Journal and was visiting professor at the Institut National d'Études Démographiques, Paris. She served on the Population Group of the Institute of British Geographers, acting for many years as its secretary. She was also on the Peripheral Regions Commission of the International Geographical Union, and travelled widely, from the Falkland Islands to remote regions of China. Her last publication will appear later this year.

Outside work Alison had a vibrant family life, bringing up four children with the love of singing and orchestral music that had inspired her, and for 22 years spent every summer holiday in the same village in Normandy so they would grow up with the language fluency and love of France she had.

She is survived by me, and our children, Catriona, Roderick, Neil and Alexander, and three grandsons, Angus, Archie and Max.
**Alistair McCleery**



### Eleanor Woolley

*Accomplished home cook and knitter of socks, cardigans, tea cosies and intricate Fair Isle sweaters*

My mother, Eleanor Woolley, who has died aged 97 of pneumonia, was a wartime railway clerk, a 1940s single parent, a primary school teaching assistant and a devoted mother and grandmother.

She lived her whole life in rural Oxfordshire, born and raised in the small town of Charlbury. She was the second of four children of Albert Griffin and his wife, Tilly (nee Hawkins). Bert, who had been invalided out of the first world war, worked in the Cotswold wool trade; until her marriage, Tilly had been in service.

Eleanor won a scholarship to Chipping Norton grammar school (now comprehensive). She left in the midst of the second world war and joined the effort as an accounts and bookings clerk for Great Western Railway. In 1943 she married, and in 1947 had her first child, Michael. The marriage failed soon after. Eleanor and Michael went back to live with her parents and she returned to her old job.

In the mid-1950s, Ernest Woolley moved in next door, fresh out of the navy. They married in 1956 and had two more children, Keith and me, AKA Alison. Ernie worked at the Cowley car factory. We lived in a council house in Charlbury with a big garden and a dog, a rabbit and bantams. My childhood was happy and carefree, without too many luxuries but with plenty of home-grown veg.

My mother's cooking was of the postwar period ("Open one can of Campbell's condensed vegetable soup … "), but she was talented at pastry and loved entering cookery competitions at the Women's Institute - brandy snaps, cream meringues and chocolates decorated with crystallised violets. An accomplished knitter of socks, cardigans, cuddly toys, tea cosies and intricate Fair Isle sweaters, she put all her love into serious practical effort.

When her youngest child reached secondary age, Eleanor went to work as a teaching assistant at Charlbury county primary, the school she and all her children had attended. She stayed for 15 years, making lasting friendships among the staff.

A few years after retiring, Eleanor and Ernie went to live in nearby Hook Norton to be close to Keith and his family. They took to the village and enjoyed attending the Baptist church there. Eleanor carried on organising us all, ringing up to remind us to put the clocks back. Lately she did not remember much, though she was always able to tell you about going to London on the train to celebrate VE day outside Buckingham Palace.

Eleanor was funny, magnetic and sociable. She selected her friends meticulously but was devoted to them. She had a beautiful soprano singing voice. She loved choral music, Maigret and Morse, crosswords, yellow roses, ginger wine and dark chocolate.

After Ernie died in 2007, Eleanor stayed in Hook Norton, supported by Keith, until dementia took too firm a hold and she spent the last two years in a nursing home.

Eleanor is survived by her three children, by five grandchildren, Emma, Harriet, Charlie, Matthew and Adrian, and her sister, Janet.
**Alice Woolley**

## Sudoku

*The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9.*

### Easy

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | | | | | | | |
| | | 8 | 9 | 6 | | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| | | | 7 | | 1 | | 8 | |
| | 5 | | | | 6 | 7 | | 9 |
| | 6 | | 1 | | 7 | | 5 | |
| 8 | | 7 | 3 | | | | 2 | |
| | 1 | | 8 | | 9 | | | |
| 4 | 7 | 9 | | 1 | 5 | 2 | | |
| | | | | | | | 9 | |

### Medium

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8 | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | 5 | | 3 | | 2 | | |
| 4 | | 9 | | | 5 | | 1 | |
| | | 4 | 6 | 8 | | 5 | | |
| | | | | | 2 | | 9 | |
| | | 6 | | | 4 | | | |
| | 6 | | 1 | | 8 | 9 | 5 | |
| | | 2 | | | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | | 3 | 2 | |

### Expert

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | | | | 2 | | |
| | | | | | | | | 3 |
| | | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | |
| 9 | | | | 5 | | 4 | 3 | |
| 2 | | | 4 | | | | 9 | |
| 7 | | | | 9 | | 6 | 5 | |
| | | 9 | | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | |
| | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | | 8 | | | | 5 | | |

## Futoshiki Easy

*Fill in the grid so that every row and column contains the numbers 1-5. The "greater than" or "less than" signs indicate where a number is larger or smaller than its neighbour.*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| □ | > | □ | | □ | > | □ | | □ |
| ∧ | | | | | | ∧ | | |
| □ | > | □ | | □ | | □ | | □ |
| | | ∧ | | | | | | |
| □ | | □ | | □ | | □ | < | □ |
| | | | | | | | | ∨ |
| 4 | | □ | | □ | | □ | | 2 |
| ∧ | | | | ∨ | | | | |
| □ | > | □ | > | □ | < | 4 | | □ |

## Kids Word search

*Find all the listed words relating to basketball in the grid, reading in straight lines, up, down or diagonally, either backwards or forwards.*

ASSIST, BLOCK, BOUNCE, CATCH, COURT, DRIBBLE, DUNK, FOUL, HOOP, JUMP, PASS, PIVOT, SCORE, SHOOT

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | D | E | M | C | B | F | H | V |
| O | P | J | L | O | O | C | A | L |
| V | E | A | U | B | T | U | U | N |
| I | A | N | S | A | B | O | R | E |
| P | C | K | C | S | F | I | R | T |
| E | P | C | H | S | I | N | R | E |
| A | M | O | O | I | K | N | U | D |
| E | U | L | O | S | C | O | R | E |
| D | J | B | P | T | O | O | H | S |

## Kids Countdown

*Can you work out the answers to the sums below?*

| Easy | Medium | Hard |
|---|---|---|
| **8** | **48** | **95** |
| + 36 | ÷ 8 | + 143 |
| ÷ 4 | + 48 | ÷ 14 |
| + 39 | *2/3 of it* | + 70 |
| ÷ 10 | - 28 | *Third of it* |
| × 9 | × 9 | + 173 |
| *- 27* | *Quarter of it* | *50% of it* |
| ÷ 6 | + 47 | *- 35* |
| × 7 | ÷ 5 | ÷ 6 |
| *- 11* | × 7 | × 7 |
| Answer | Answer | Answer |

## Solutions

**Kids Countdown**

*Easy: 10*
*Medium: 91*
*Hard: 77*

**Sudoku** *Easy*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
| 1 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 9 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 9 |
| 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 5 |

**Sudoku** *Medium*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 9 |
| 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| 9 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 7 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| 2 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| 8 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 7 |

**Sudoku** *Expert*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| 4 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 |
| 7 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| 5 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| 1 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 9 |

**Futoshiki**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | > | 1 | | 4 | > | 3 | | 5 |
| ∧ | | | | | | ∧ | | |
| 3 | > | 2 | | 1 | | 5 | | 4 |
| | | ∧ | | | | | | |
| 1 | | 4 | | 5 | | 2 | < | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | ∨ |
| 4 | | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | | 2 |
| ∧ | | | | ∨ | | | | |
| 5 | > | 3 | > | 2 | < | 4 | | 1 |

**Kids Word search**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | D | E | M | C | B | F | H | V |
| O | P | J | L | O | O | C | A | L |
| V | E | A | U | B | T | U | U | N |
| I | A | N | S | A | B | O | R | E |
| P | C | K | C | S | F | I | R | T |
| E | P | C | H | S | I | N | R | E |
| A | M | O | O | I | K | N | U | D |
| E | U | L | O | S | C | O | R | E |
| D | J | B | P | T | O | O | H | S |

# Puzzles

## Yesterday's solutions

**Killer sudoku**
*Easy*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| 6 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4 |
| 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 1 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| 7 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 |

*Medium*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 5 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 3 |
| 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 2 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 |

**Codeword**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | | A | | V | | O | | S | | T | |
| Q | U | A | S | H | I | N | G | | W | O | O | D |
| | L | | S | | X | | R | | A | | F | |
| U | L | N | A | | E | V | E | N | T | F | U | L |
| | | | Y | | N | | | | H | | | |
| A | M | B | I | T | | S | Q | U | E | L | C | H |
| | A | | N | | O | | U | | | | U | |
| O | X | Y | G | E | N | | I | N | S | U | L | T |
| | I | | | | T | | N | | T | | L | |
| E | M | B | R | Y | O | S | | C | R | U | S | T |
| | | | E | | | | W | | A | | | |
| P | E | R | J | U | R | E | R | | I | N | K | Y |
| | M | | E | | O | | I | | G | | I | |
| Z | I | N | C | | W | I | T | H | H | O | L | D |
| | T | | T | | S | | S | | T | | O | |

**Cryptic crossword**
*Solution No. 29,074*

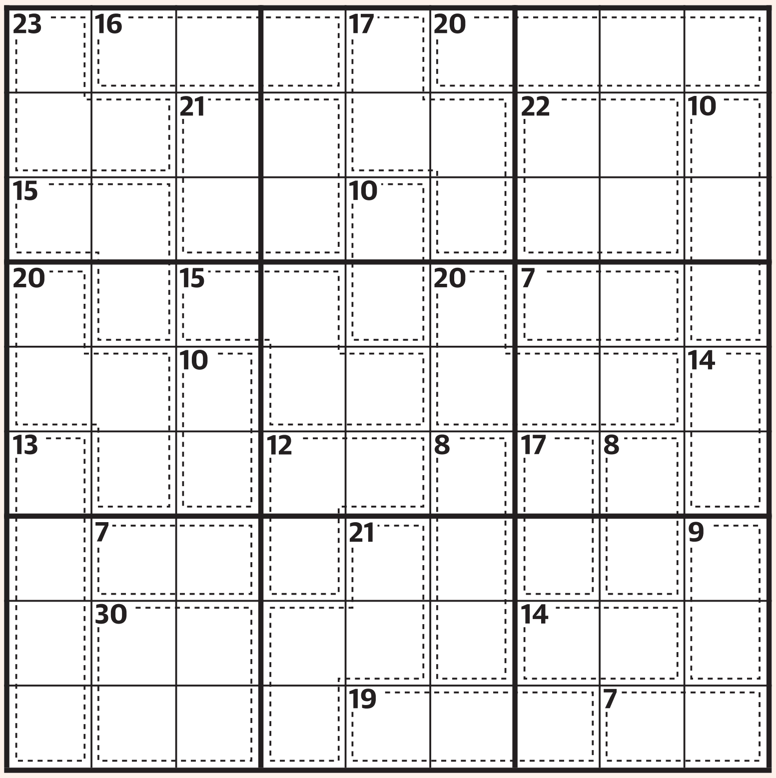
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | Y | G | E | O | R | G | E | | A | L | F | R | E | D |
| A | | A | | R | | E | | | | A | | E | | E |
| B | U | M | P | I | N | T | O | | C | O | O | L | I | T |
| O | | E | | G | | T | | | | T | | A | | H |
| O | U | T | R | I | G | H | T | | M | I | S | T | E | R |
| N | | E | | N | | R | | E | | A | | I | | O |
| | | | | | C | O | M | M | O | N | N | O | U | N |
| T | | L | | W | | U | | B | | S | | N | | E |
| H | E | A | R | I | N | G | D | O | G | | | | | |
| E | | P | | S | | H | | N | | S | | N | | S |
| G | A | D | G | E | T | | S | P | I | T | T | O | O | N |
| R | | A | | A | | | | O | | U | | B | | A |
| E | U | N | I | C | E | | G | I | M | C | R | A | C | K |
| A | | C | | R | | | | N | | C | | L | | E |
| T | H | E | M | E | T | | S | T | R | O | L | L | E | D |

**Want more?** Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at **theguardian.com/crossword**. To buy puzzle books, visit **guardianbookshop.com** or call **0330 333 6846**.

## Killer sudoku

### Hard No 866

*The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.*



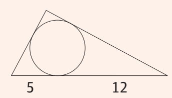
## Chris Maslanka's puzzles

### Pyrgic puzzles

**1** Pedanticus was listening to Radio 4 when he suddenly leapt up and smashed his DAB radio with a poker yelling "Flaccid! Flaccid! Flaccid!" What had occasioned this access of non-placidity?

**2** Someone accused the BBC of being stuck in the past. This suggested to me the following simple (but perhaps thematically exaggerated) puzzle: BBC = 9BC. Find B & C. Usual rules apply.

**3** According to the catalogue of *Rogues' Gallery* on Poppycock Terrace, Garabaggio's *Through My Transom Shines the Sun* is a circle snugly fitting a right-angled triangle. This time I copied down the measurements very carefully. Unfortunately there were only two of them. My brain was hurting, so I asked Andy and Candy to find a) the dimensions of the triangle; b) the radius of the circle; c) the area of the triangle. What is interesting about the answer to c)? Does it have more general implications?




**4** Down at the *Last Chance Saloon* Bart finds some playing cards are missing after a rowdy game in which two full merged packs of cards were used. Now, if they are dealt out in pairs 1 is left over; in threes 2 are left over, in fours 3 are left over, in fives 4 are left over, and in sixes 5 are left over. How many are left?

**5** Multiplying together 4, 5 & 6 gives twice what you would get if you reduced each number by 1 before multiplying. Find a set of 10 consecutive numbers which multiply to twice what they would if you had reduced them all by one before multiplying.

**email: maslanka@easynet.co.uk**

### Wordplay

**Wordpool**
In each case find the correct definition:

**THERIANTHROPE**
a) man from Theria
b) sufferer from dysthymia
c) person who can assume animal form
d) ordinary person

**YAPOK**
a) water opossum
b) Java cotton
c) small island of the Indonesian archipelago
d) novel by Lem

**RUNCATION**
a) snoring
b) holiday from running
c) reading
d) weeding

**What Knot?**



(7)

**E pluribus unum**
Rearrange the letters of INCA POEMS to make a single word.

**Dropouts**
Replace each asterisk by a letter to make a word: S*A*I*D

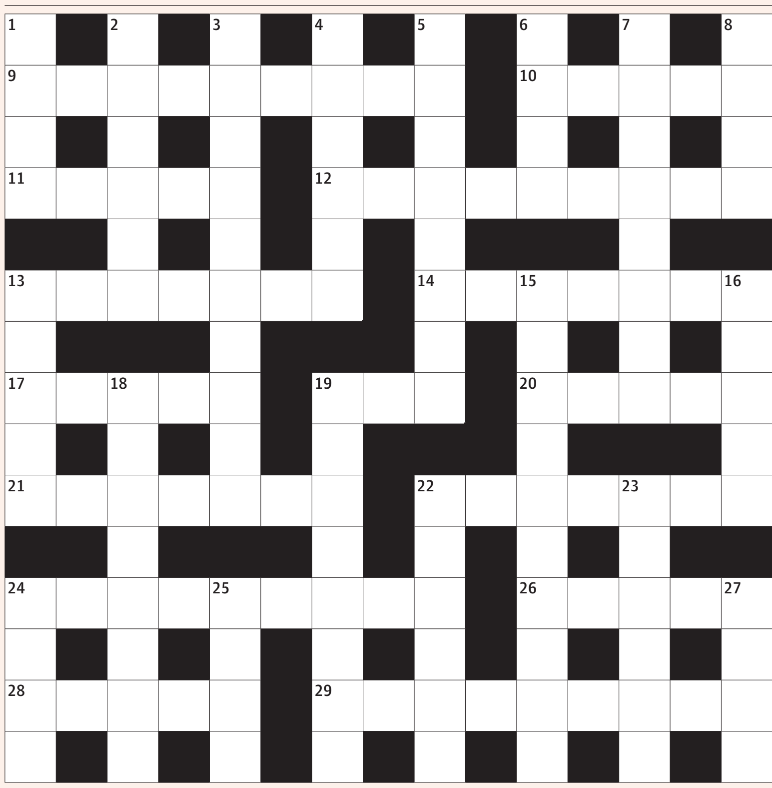
**Word Centre**
Identify a word from this centre: ***BOY***

**Cryptic**
What Arnold Schwarzenegger initially used to be (3)

**Missing Links**
Find a word which follows the first word in the clue and precedes the second in each case making a fresh word or phrase. Eg the answer to *fish mix* could be *cake* (*fish*cake & *cake* mix) and to *bat man* it could be *he* (bat*he* & *he*-man)…
a) recreational store
b) banana screen
c) ship shifter
d) jar tone
e) water tears
f) bubble shield

**©CMM 2023.** **Solutions on Page 58**

## Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,075 set by Picaroon

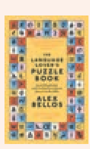


**Across**

9 Awfully cool hat and coat for Charlie Brown (9)
10 People favouring the right kind of 11 (5)
11 Spy university thus making notes on staff (5)
12 Bill, exploding, sees red — he gets a talking-to (9)
13 Game point, Raducanu finally about to break (7)
14 American kind of 11 having two members around (7)
17 See 24 down
19 Hit kind of 11 from the '40s (3)
20 Was violent Republican past it? (5)
21 I'm disappointed a remedy fails (5,2)
22 More verbose kind of 11 in Wagner's case (7)
24 Kind of 11 provided in the Guardian for one working from home (9)
26 Ex-president's kind of 11 always from the east (5)
28 Clubs plugging European kind of 11 for a 19? (5)
29 Kind of 11 and film always for poet or Elon Musk (9)

**Down**

1 James Cameron screens The Sting (4)
2 Gas from tap is so gently rising (6)
3 Having the 10 kind of 11 from a flat region (3-7)
4 Jaguar may be kept here, getting kind of 11 (6)
5 Shiner shown by teacher getting hit (8)
6 Honour to welcome old maker of 11 (4)
7 For a ball, swerve unfashionable kind of 11 (8)
8 Man perhaps lies in a drunken state (4)
13 Kind of 11, one prelude from Debussy that's allegro (5)
15 Lamentations I shortened in translation (10)
16 Foreign words for the respected figure in church (5)
18 Tormenting first of prisoners in gulag abroad (8)
19 Great part of speech turning up on line in book (8)
22 Poor person's gag when making a speech (6)
23 Naturally possessed, like a sandwich filling, we hear (6)
24,17 Laugh a tad oddly about kind of 11 getting attacked (3,1,3,2)
25 Right behind possible provider of milk jug (4)
27 Pretentious behaviour in pieces of 11 (4)



**The first five correct entries drawn each week win a copy of The Language Lover's Puzzle Book by Alex Bellos**
**Entries to:** The Guardian Crossword No 29,075, P.O. Box 17566, Birmingham, B33 3EZ, or Fax to 0121-742 1313 by Friday. Solution and winners in The Guardian on Monday 29 May.

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# SATURDAY

ISSUE Nº86 | 20 MAY 2023

The Guardian

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**Sadiq Khan comes clean**
PAGE 20

LIFESTYLE
**How to holiday like a pro**
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## A BIGGER SPLASH

*The Little Mermaid's Halle Bailey finds her voice*

PAGE 10


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SATURDAY
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—
*Byline illustrations: Delphine Lee*
*Spot illustrations: Lalalimola*





## Smart shot
*The best pictures taken on phones*
**Lucía Mara**

**Untitled, New York, 2022**
**Shot on iPhone 13 Pro**

Seconds before this was taken, Lucía Mara had chased the woman down New York's Third Avenue. It was the Argentinian photographer's last day in the city and she was running late to a meeting before her flight home to Buenos Aires.

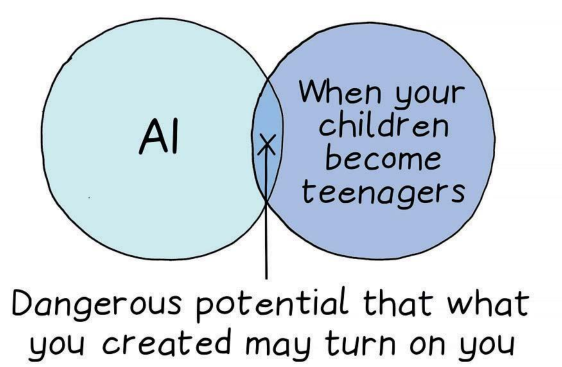
It was a sunny October day, bright after a night of rain, and the early afternoon light had illuminated the woman's violet hair just as Mara, who studied photography and film at the University of California, passed by. She abandoned thoughts of her meeting and took off in pursuit, then, breathless, requested permission to take a photo. The woman, she says, was "ecstatic".

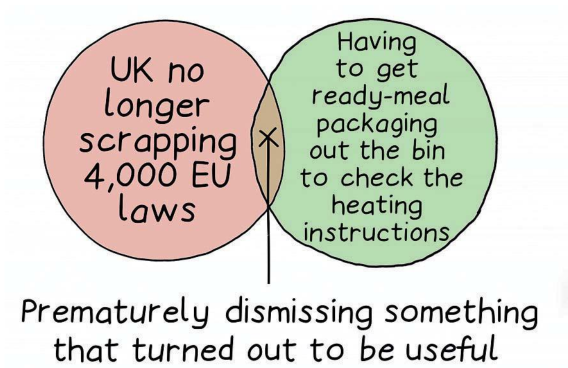
"I took this picture while she was still reacting to my question. I liked how her full-blown expressiveness matches her bold hair, and how the green window display reflects in her sunglasses. I'm always drawn to reflections, shadows, windows, doors and the visual multiplicity and ways of seeing that they offer," Mara says.

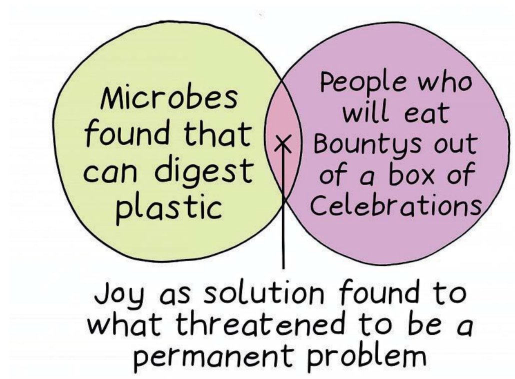
She believes she works at a much slower and more deliberate pace when using a normal camera. "Looking through a viewfinder somehow changes my rhythm; I even breathe differently," she says. "With a phone, I'm less rigorous. There is an immediacy and a spontaneity which allows for the unexpected. This moment was all about her."
*Grace Holliday*

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## Edith Pritchett A week in Venn diagrams




EDITH @edithcartoonist

COVER: ERIK CARTER/THE GUARDIAN. STYLING: ANNA SU. DRESS: CHRISTIAN SIRIANO. RING: BAD BINCH TONGTONG X MONSECRET. THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF GALERIA JORGE MARA

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*The singer and actor on stripping on stage, a duff job wearing lederhosen, and snogging Mel Smith*

# Q&A Michael Ball

*Interview: Rosanna Greenstreet*



PAUL STUART/CAMERA PRESS

Born in Worcestershire, Michael Ball, 60, studied at Guildford School of Acting. In 1985, he made his West End debut in Les Misérables and went on to star in Aspects of Love and The Phantom of the Opera. In 1989 he had a hit single with Love Changes Everything. He won Olivier awards in 2008 and 2013 for performances in Hairspray and Sweeney Todd. He is currently appearing in a revival of Aspects of Love at the Lyric theatre in London. Over the years, he has recorded many albums, the latest being Together in Vegas, with Alfie Boe. He lives in London with his partner, Cathy McGowan.

**When were you happiest?**
My first summer working, in 1984. I'd come out of drama school, I'd landed a job that got me an Equity card doing Godspell in Aberystwyth - and it was just unmitigated joy.

**What is your earliest memory?**
Watching Winston Churchill's funeral procession on the black and white television in our front room.

**Which living person do you most admire, and why?**
Volodymyr Zelenskiy, his trajectory from performer to leading his country and then stepping up in such a magnificent way is extraordinary.

**Aside from a property, what's the most expensive thing you've bought?**
My dogs. They didn't cost that much to buy, but I've been paying for them since. We've two Tibetan terriers, Danny and Wilbur.

**What makes you unhappy?**
Not being good at something.

**What is your most unappealing habit?**
Sitting in my pants on the sofa, watching telly.

**My most unappealing habit? Sitting in my pants on the sofa, watching telly**

**Describe yourself in three words**
Fun. Fun. Fun.

**What was your most embarrassing moment?**
During the technical rehearsal of Aspects of Love in 1989. They told me it would be discreetly lit because I was paranoid about being in just my pants. I walked on and every spotlight in the building followed me round the stage.

**What is the worst thing anyone has said to you?**
"Unfortunately, Michael, I don't think you're ever going to work in the acting profession until you're about 40, and then it'll only be in minor character roles." Drama teacher at Guildford School of Acting.

**Would you choose fame or anonymity?**
Anonymity.

**What was the last lie that you told?**
The answer to that last question.

**What is your guiltiest pleasure?**
Married at First Sight Australia.

**What does love feel like?**
The best of times, the worst of times.

**What was the best kiss of your life?**
Mel Smith in 2008. He was playing my husband in Hairspray and we used to have a little peck after our song. On his final matinee performance, he grabbed my face and french kissed me.

**Have you ever said 'I love you' and not meant it?**
Yes, all the time.

**What is the worst job you've done?**
Handing out leaflets for a European coach trip wearing just lederhosen, in February and March in Surrey. It was freezing, and I got fired.

**When did you last cry, and why?**
Watching Long Lost Family on telly.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?**
I am pretty proud of having got Aspects of Love back into the West End.

**What keeps you awake at night?**
Having got Aspects of Love back into the West End.

**Tell us a secret**
I'm very good at keeping secrets so, no, I shan't.



# Experience

## *I've got the best memory in the world*

*As told to Daniel Dylan Wray*

Growing up in Oxford, Mississippi, I never thought I had a good memory. None of my friends or family would have said I did, either.

In 2013, when I was studying biomedical engineering, I stumbled across a Ted Talk by Joshua Foer, the author of Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything. He mentioned techniques such as the "memory palace" or the "journey method". They tell you that if you want to remember things, imagine you're journeying through a specific physical space, depositing images that represent the information you're trying to recall.

I applied these techniques to my studies and day-to-day tasks. The first time I used a memory palace to recall a 20-item shopping list, I felt I'd encountered an earth-shattering superhuman ability – although it's something anyone can do.

Initially, competitions were of no interest, but I tried a few activities that they involve, such as memorising the order of a deck of cards or lists of numbers. I started training in March 2013 and by September I had broken the one-minute mark for memorising and recalling a single deck of cards. The national record was slightly over a minute, so I realised I could compete with the best. In 2014, when I was 22, I entered the USA Memory Championship and came second. That spurred me on.

Memorising cards has always been my favourite. I break the cards into pairs and assign an image to each pair. To the human brain, images are a lot more memorable than the abstract idea of, say, the six of diamonds.

I use my childhood home as one of my memory palaces, and the first stop is outside the house, at the mailbox. If I was remembering a deck of cards, I could associate the first pair of cards with the image of Michael Jordan slamdunking a basketball into my mailbox. Then the next stop is the driveway. So I'll associate the second pair with an image of Ian McKellen as Gandalf leading the Fellowship of the Ring up the driveway.

**The first time I recalled a 20-item shopping list, I felt superhuman**

The images can be random – they don't always need to be related to the information you're trying to remember. It's just about trying to make mental images that are as creative as possible to create a memorable story – they are inevitably ridiculous. It's fun, which people might not expect, because memory seems like this dry thing. The fastest people in the world can memorise a deck of cards in 15 seconds or under. My personal best in a world championship event is 15.61 seconds.

That said, the world championships are boring to watch. It's like watching 300 people take a test, with desks all around the room. A lot of people, myself included, use earplugs. Some even have contraptions like horse blinkers to block out other people.

American memorisers used to lag behind the rest of the world, but I was able to take the fight to the Europeans and became world champion for three years between 2015 and 2017. The first time I won, the prize money was about $30,000. It's not professional sports money, but I was a medical student at the time, and that was a lot.

Every world champion I've met would agree that they don't have a superhuman memory; they just learn their techniques. I've never met anyone with a truly photographic memory. No one at a competition has been able to look at a page of numbers and recite it immediately.

I'm semi-retired from those competitions and instead compete in the Memory League. That involves fast events, like memorising a deck of cards as quickly as you can, or 50 words in under a minute. If the Memory World Championship is a marathon, the Memory League is like a sprint. I am this year's world champion.

In ordinary life, I'm not sure if my memory has changed much. I do almost automatically put the techniques I've learned from memory sports into practice, though. When I meet people, it's hard for me not to turn their name into an image. Katherine, for example, sounds a bit like "cat run", so I'll remember a cat running around this person's face. I've never really thought of myself as a creative person, but the nice thing about memory sports is they have opened up that side of me.
**Alex Mullen**

*Do you have an experience to share? Email experience@theguardian.com*



Portrait: Charity Rachelle

**Want to dine across the divide?**
Scan here to apply

*June, 75* – **thinks Covid was a hoax and that lockdowns were inhumane**



*Shelby, 25* – **says the virus was a real danger to people with compromised immunity**

# Dining across the divide

## *Can breaking bread bridge political differences?*

*Interview: Zoe Williams*

*June, 75, Argyll and Bute*
**Occupation** *Self-employed, a trained chef*
**Voting record** *Once voted SNP, but never again. Used to vote Conservative, but decided three years ago to desist from voting altogether*
**Amuse bouche** *Sings in an inclusive choir, which recently performed with a national ballet company*

*Shelby, 25, Glasgow*
**Occupation** *Project manager*
**Voting record** *Usually Labour in general elections and Green in local elections*
**Amuse bouche** *Is the first woman in her family to join the construction industry*

**For starters**
*June* I hadn't heard of the restaurant and was pleasantly surprised. The haddock and chips was delicious.
*Shelby* I had lemon sole, broccoli and chips. Best thing I've eaten in so long.
*June* Shelby is a lovely, lovely girl. She's vibrant, enthusiastic and curious. She has a thirst for knowledge.
*Shelby* June is a big conspiracy theorist. She was so lovely, but I came out going, "What was that conversation?"

**The big beef**
*June* I believe Covid was the biggest hoax our civilisation has seen in a long long time. I obviously don't know what caused it, but I suspect it may be a bioweapon released on humanity, perhaps from chemtrails, water supply, food, whatever. I can't prove any of this, but I just join the dots and use my eyes, believing what I see.
*Shelby* Her theory was that everyone can heal themselves: you don't need antibiotics, you don't need medical attention unless your leg has fallen off. I said, "I don't agree with you there." I have twin boys who have a genetic condition affecting their immune system, so I did have to give her that perspective: "You might think it works for you. But it's not a reality."
*June* I believe it wasn't right to shut down small businesses and keep open big supermarkets with hundreds of people in them. Lots of things I saw didn't add up. I think lockdowns were disastrous for everyone. I know someone who died in hospital, my friend's mother. She died and my friend didn't get to see her. That's absolutely inhumane.
*Shelby* She thought Covid was part of a secret agenda to get people to stay in, to stay obedient. She believes it was a bioweapon. I said, "Even if it was a bioweapon, it was still a virus, no?" But no, she doesn't believe in the spread of diseases.

**Sharing plate**
*June* I was quite surprised that she was in favour of trans people going into schools and nurseries. I am not. I think it can go too far and it can influence children who are not ready to be influenced in that direction. So we disagreed on that, but in a friendly way.
*Shelby* A big thing for her is the gender-recognition legislation that's just passed in Scotland. Basically, she thinks there's a bigger agenda. She doesn't think drag has a place in schools. I think she's got it into her head that all trans people are drag performers: drag and transgender are the same to June. I tried to explain to her that trans people are normal people. I like to think I got her to take that point.
*June* If a trans person was a teacher, that would be really tricky. They could teach the curriculum, but it wouldn't be OK if they were teaching children about their personal lives. It's leading them down a path that they may not want to go. Their brains aren't ready.

**For afters**
*Shelby* I'm very much pro-monarchy: it's a fundamental part of being British. I love the idea of the coronation – it gives you a sense of community. June's view was that they are parasites. They have too much money and wealth. And they're basically all paedophiles who get away with everything. We did break that down a bit. I said, "Maybe one or two people in the family have faced allegations, but to call the whole family that is a bit unfair and a bit naive."
*June* I'm strongly against them. I question why Charles would be friends with Jimmy Savile, who was given a knighthood. You can't tell me that the security services that surround the royals don't have full knowledge of what these people are.

**Takeaways**
*Shelby* She was so agreeable that we got to the end of the meal and she said, "I feel like we agreed on everything," and I thought, "No, we definitely didn't."
*June* She's lovely. I wish I was her. I just wish I'd had a fraction of her knowledge when I was her age.

*June and Shelby ate at Crabshakk in Glasgow; crabshakk.co.uk. Want to meet someone from across the divide? Go to theguardian.com/different-views*

ADDITIONAL REPORTING: KITTY DRAKE

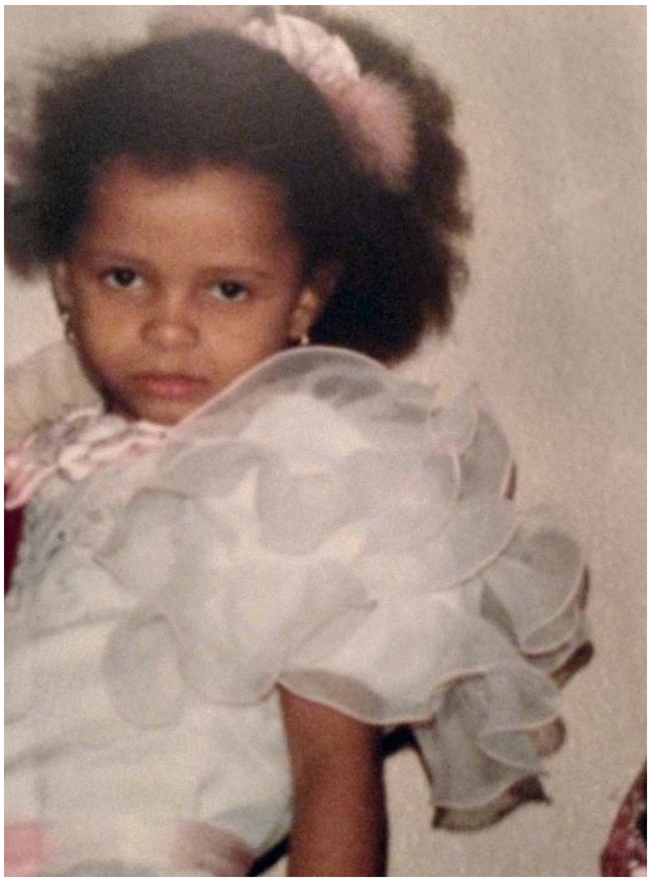
*Portrait: Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert*

# Flashback

## *Singer Fleur East recalls her shy childhood, how she ended up on X Factor twice and finding her own voice*

*Interview: Harriet Gibsone*
*Main portrait: Simon Webb*
*Styling: Andie Redman*

### 1990 My face is saying 'I want to go to bed'



Born in London in 1987, Fleur East is a musician and presenter. As a contestant on 2014's X Factor, her cover of Uptown Funk was so popular it charted before Mark Ronson's original was released. After she finished in second place, her debut single, Sax, went platinum. She parted ways with Simon Cowell's label in 2017, setting up her own, Platinum East, on which she released her 2020 album Fearless. She is now a host on Hits Radio and is married to the stylist and designer Marcel Badiane-Robin. Her new single, Count the Ways, is out now.

**My mum loved** to put me in the most flamboyant dresses you can imagine: big poofy sleeves and skirts and shoulder pads, with coloured socks to match. This photo was most likely to have been taken at a family gathering in our house in Walthamstow, north-east London - I'm about three and I look fed up. I was probably overtired, but all my family were playing music and having fun and laughing. My expression is screaming: "Come on, take the picture! I want to go to bed."

My mum and dad had a really good social life - a lot of my childhood memories are of them hosting loads of people - family, friends and neighbours. Music was always a big part of our family DNA. We would listen to Michael Jackson, Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder, George Michael and Simply Red. Because they had speakers in every room, and liked to listen to tunes and party all night, I can sleep anywhere, any time.

Despite being exposed to so much socialising growing up, I wasn't an extrovert. I was a quiet kid. A scaredy-cat. I used to sing, but only ever in my room by myself. I had a poster of 3T on my wall, and Destiny's Child and the Spice Girls were huge inspirations. One of my earliest memories is playing a keyboard that my parents had bought me - I'd sit in the corner of my room and make up songs.

One time I looked behind me and Mum and Dad were standing over me watching. I burst into tears. because I was so shy and mortified that they had heard me. They said: "Keep singing! Keep singing!"

After that, they would get me to perform songs for their friends. I didn't love it at first, but I am so glad they encouraged me. I'd probably still be singing alone in my room if it wasn't for them.

**I was 13** before I was able to perform confidently in front of other people. There was an after-school club called Ladders where I could sing and write songs, and I loved it, especially as I wasn't very self-assured at school to begin with. I wanted to blend in, like a lot of kids do when they're becoming teenagers. Other students would sometimes comment on my hair, so I didn't want to wear it natural because I worried that it might draw too much attention. I'd put it in a ponytail. Then one day I just thought: "You know what? This is my hair. I'm proud of it." I stopped worrying about what other people thought, fully embraced who I was and turned into a real social butterfly.

I liked to talk to all the different groups, play games, and have debates about life. I was quite popular, and with the singing I really started to come out of my shell. I even became a little rebellious - nothing too extreme, but my parents broke up when I was 15 and I knew I could get away with going out a bit more if I was staying with my dad during the week. Overall, I was a good kid, though - I worked hard in my exams and never went too wild.

Part of that work ethic comes from my parents. They were full of life and energy, really outgoing people, but they always encouraged me and my sister to focus. When I told them I wanted to be a pop star, they never said it would be out of my reach. There weren't many success stories from our area - all we had was East 17 - but they backed me anyway. They said: "That's great. You can do it. Just get a degree first." [East studied journalism and contemporary history at Queen Mary University of London]. They made me feel that becoming a singer was achievable.

When I was 16, I started a group called Addictiv Ladies with some friends from Ladders. We applied for X Factor, mainly for a laugh and so we could get some feedback, and we ended up getting into the live show. We got booted out in the first week, but I knew from that moment that singing was what I wanted to do. I wanted more.

For the next 10 years, my career took me all over the place - I worked at Topshop as a sales assistant and in a nightclub as a champagne girl. I was

HAIR/MAKEUP: KESHIA EAST. ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF FLEUR EAST





a market researcher. I was in another girl group and toured with DJ Fresh for a few years.

By the time I went on X Factor for the second time, I was 26 and thought: "Right! I'm ready for it now." Simon Cowell really backed me and we were good at collaborating. He'd always say: "Fleur knows what she wants. I don't need to tell her - she tells me." And I loved that.

The whole experience went very fast, but I was ready to live my dream, and I'd always head back to Walthamstow and tell my family all the insider information: "This is what telly and the red carpet is really like." I could see a lot of people around me getting swept up in the glitz and glamour and the ego that can come with the show, but I stayed close to my roots and that kept me focused.

**Being signed to a major label**, having a huge debut single, then being put on a shelf [Fleur was dropped from Syco in 2017] and having to start again was the toughest thing I've gone through professionally. I felt like I had made it and then all of a sudden I hadn't - it was gone. My parents told me: "Don't let that stop you. You know what talent you have." They really encouraged me, and I realised that nothing has ever come easy for me. I am used to being the underdog. It was my default mode and I should embrace it.

I might not be travelling the world like I was a few years ago, but I'm still recording music. I feel so proud of everything I've achieved, especially when I get mums of black or mixed-race kids saying they see me as an example to their daughters because of the way I wear my hair or because I am a woman in the music industry.

My husband knows me better than anyone, and he can see that even though I am happy, there's still that little girl's voice inside me, the one that says: "Oh no, maybe you're not good enough. Who is going to come to your show? Who is going to buy your music?" Over the years, I have learned how to quieten that voice, because the love and the passion for what I do is greater than the fear. But I don't want to lose her totally. She is why I'm as grounded as I am. I'm very aware of where I am from, where it all began - and I still rock a scrunchie every now and then.

**2023** **We got booted out of X Factor on the first live show – but from that moment I knew it was what I wanted to do**

# ‘IF I’D SEEN A BLACK MERMAID AS A CHILD, THAT WOULD HAVE CHANGED MY LIFE’

From tween YouTube sensation, to pop star, to Beyoncé’s tour mate … now Halle Bailey is about to hit the big screen playing Ariel in a multimillion-dollar remake of the Disney classic, The Little Mermaid. She tells *Rebecca Nicholson* about overcoming self-doubt, her soulmate sister Chlöe, and a racist backlash

*Portraits: Erik Carter*
*Styling: Anna Su*





INSIDE HALLE BAILEY'S apartment, in West Hollywood, the 23-year-old singer and actor is glowing in the early morning sunlight. This is not interview hyperbole: she really looks as though she is glowing. Rob Marshall, the director of The Little Mermaid, said he cast her as Ariel because she had an "otherworldly sensibility", and, instantly, you can see what he means. Yesterday, an important package arrived. It contains a collection of Disney merchandise: branded water bottles, shirts, Ariel dolls. This stuff, with her face on it, will soon to be in the homes of countless parents with small children all across the world. "I was *astounded* at how cool all of it is," she says, sweetly. "Like, insane."

Bailey is a Disney star cut from old-fashioned cloth. She is impossibly polite, awestruck by her new life as a Disney princess, ignoring the negativity – more on that later – and seemingly utterly lovely and unflappable, or at least well media-trained, or probably both. She offers opinions, but is careful to balance them out: she misses her home town of Atlanta, Georgia she says, but, equally, she loves Los Angeles. Somehow, despite the imminent release of a reported $150m-200m blockbuster that will ultimately rise or fall on her performance as a character already beloved by millions, she is perfectly calm.

The original Little Mermaid came out in 1989, as the Aids crisis raged, adapting the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale into an animated children's film that remains a top five contender in any list of the best Disney films of all time. It has a history of being more subversive than it might initially appear. Ursula, the sea witch, was based on the drag queen Divine, while Ariel's dissatisfaction with the constraints of her life under the sea have long been viewed as a metaphor for coming out. Or, if that doesn't work for you, you might prefer to see the film as "a beautiful story about a young woman changing her core identity to please a man", as the comedian Trevor Noah joked on The Daily Show last year.

In 2019, it was announced that Bailey had been cast in the forthcoming live-action remake. At 19, she was already a pop star. As one half of the duo Chloe x Halle with her older sister, she had been in the public eye since they became YouTube famous as younger teens. "Suddenly, there are a lot more eyes on me than I ever would have thought," she says, adding that she tries not to think about it. When news of her casting broke, the racially charged hashtag #NotMyAriel trended on Twitter. It continues to re-emerge when a new trailer or poster appears, with clips or teasers, for example, being strategically "downvoted".

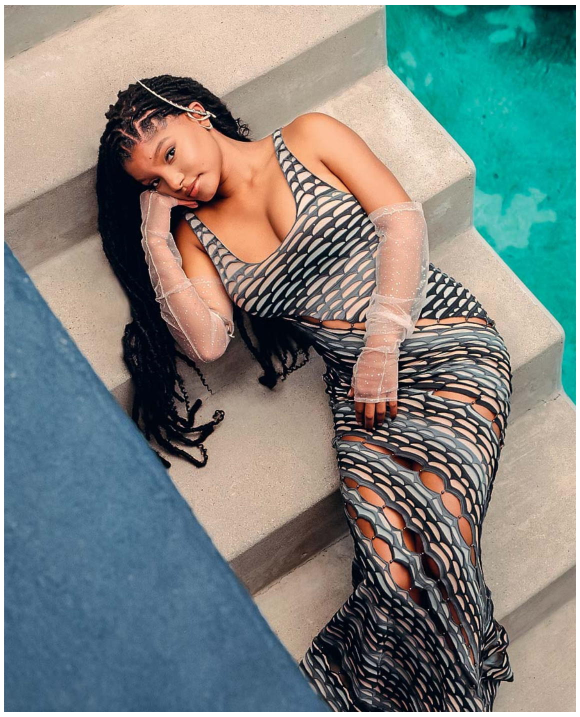
Given the extent of the noise, is it really possible not to think about it? "Yeah, we're all human beings, so if we see anything negative about ourselves, of course it's going to hurt or sting a little bit, especially remarks like those. I expected it, honestly."

Her breezy front gives way a little. "I mean, yeah. The world we live in today, just being a black woman, you have a certain awareness that comes with life, in general. So I wasn't very surprised or shocked. I think it's just the way that you respond and move, and know that inside you're worthy, and you're here for a reason."

Bailey received widespread public support, including from Jodi Benson, who voiced Ariel in the 1989 film, and Halle Berry, who tweeted: "This means so much! Can't wait." When the first teaser appeared in 2022, TikTok filled up with parents filming young black children, astonished and overjoyed at what they saw: this new Ariel, swimming up through the wreckage of the ship, into the light, was black, too. This is what mattered to her. "Because I feel like, if I would have had a black mermaid, that would have been insane, that would have changed my whole perspective, my whole life, my confidence, my self-worth. You're able to see a person who looks like you, when you're young? Some people are just like, oh, it's whatever, because they've had it their whole life. It's nothing to them. But it's so important."

Who did she look up to when she was growing up? "A lot of musicians, amazing black women who were singers, like Jill Scott, Erykah Badu, Janelle Monáe, Alicia Keys, Beyoncé … " Her eldest sister, Ski, had Destiny's Child posters on her bedroom wall. "I remember growing up and feeling like I had a lane I could pursue because of these women. They made me feel confident in the skin I was in."

Bailey is one of four children. As well as Chlöe and Ski, she has a younger brother, Branson. They are all close. She was raised in Atlanta, and you can still hear traces of the accent. When she was about three, she began appearing in advertisements. "Little print commercials," she explains. "People would come up to my mom and say, 'Oh, they [she and Chlöe] should model'," she says, laughing. "My mom was like, really? Sure. And next thing you know, I'm modelling and doing photoshoots and little commercials in Atlanta and things here and there."



Acting wasn't her main ambition. "Music took over when I was very young," she says. Halle and Chlöe taught themselves how to play instruments by watching videos online. When they were 11 and 13 respectively, they posted a clip to YouTube, singing Beyoncé's Best Thing I Never Had, and, later, Pretty Hurts. The videos took off in a big way. In 2012, their viral success earned them an appearance on The Ellen DeGeneres Show. The whole family moved to Los Angeles, so that Chlöe and Halle could pursue their musical dreams. Their father, Doug, was their manager for a long time, though when I ask if that is still the case today, Bailey says it is not. "Mmm-nnn," she says, shaking her head. When did that stop? "I don't know the exact pinpoint for it. A few years ago? Maybe, like, two years ago?" The family ties are loosening: while Halle has made inroads into the Disney world, Chlöe has just released her first solo record.

Beyoncé is a big part of their success story. Chlöe had already played the younger version of Beyoncé's character in the 2003 film The Fighting Temptations, about a gospel choir in Georgia. When Beyoncé set up her management company Parkwood Entertainment, Chloe x Halle, as they were then known, were one of the first acts she signed, giving those viral covers the official seal of approval. They toured arenas with her as her support act, and appeared in the videos for the album Lemonade. Is Beyoncé a mentor? A friend? "She's all of the things, honestly. A mentor, a friend, a sister, an aunt," says Bailey. "I mean, she's an icon. She's a legend. And the way that she just carries herself and holds herself – it feels as though she's normal, like a regular human being. But I'm like, 'You're *Beyoncé*'," she says, as if in awe.

Even after all these years of working together, you still feel that way? "Yeah, of course! There's moments where you sit with her, and she's a regular person, like you and me," she says, kindly. "It's cool. But then you see her become a superhero on stage." In 2020, Beyoncé presented the sisters with a Billboard Rising Star award. "You manage to shine in every room you enter, and I'll always love you," she said.

Halle was 13 and her sister 15 when they became pop stars. As Chloe x Halle, they have released two albums, though in 2022 they got their own, individual social media accounts, and Chlöe released her solo album, which Halle is quick to plug ("Her album, In Pieces, is a beautiful, beautiful work of art"). I ask if it feels odd to be working on her own, after so long together. "It doesn't feel odd or awkward at all," she says, firmly. She is fiercely supportive of her sister, and says Chlöe is the same when it comes to her. "She's a big part of the reason why I was able to be OK every time I walked on that Little Mermaid set. She came to London with me for the first month, just to make sure I was OK. She was like, 'You're good, you can do this', and then she went back home." Their "independent journeys", as she puts it, were inevitable, "but we're never far away from each other".

Together, they were nominated for five Grammy awards, worked hard, played the game, toured the world. It meant that Halle essentially grew up in the spotlight. "It's part of the reason why I feel so at home on stage, because that was my home for a lot of my childhood."

Has it made her more mature than other 23-year-olds? I imagine not many of her peers were doing their homework on the tour bus, waiting to open for Beyoncé. "I feel more mature in certain areas of life," she says.



HAIR: TINISHA MEEKS. MAKEUP: CHRISTIANA CASSELL. BAILEY WEARS: (RIGHT) DRESS BY KATE BARTON, HEADPIECE BY GUCCI, EARRINGS BY LEIGH MILLER; (LEFT) DRESS AND JEWELLERY BY RUI, GLOVES BY SEYMOURE; (PREVIOUS PAGES)TOP BY RUI, JEWELLERY BY LEIGH MILLER.



Business is easy for her, for example. "I feel like a woman when I'm in those lanes. But something so simple as being at home, or doing errands, I feel like, oh my gosh, this is a big deal." She pauses. "Because I didn't have the regular bricks-and-mortar way of schooling, I didn't go to prom, I didn't experience those things. So in my personal life, it feels like I'm experiencing a lot of things for the first time."

Is it a kind of delayed adolescence? "Yeah. You said it perfectly. I guess it's not just errands. It's living alone for the first time." She moved out of the family home three years ago, though much of that time was spent making The Little Mermaid in the UK. Now Chlöe has an apartment in the same building as Halle. "We're on different floors," Halle says. "So I have my own space, but we're not too far from one another." Chlöe's cat, Apollo, occasionally makes an appearance on our video call, chasing Halle's cat, Poseidon, around the room; she is cat-sitting while Chlöe is on tour.

Domesticity is a new world. "To pay my own bills and keep up with the timings of things, things like that are, like, *whoa*," she says. "Or being out at a club with my friends." Is she able to go clubbing with her friends? "If I wear, like, shades and a mask. In LA, everybody is somebody, so people don't really bother you. They kind of just leave you alone."

Bailey was asked to audition for The Little Mermaid after Marshall saw her at the Grammys, with Chlöe, performing Where Is the Love, in tribute to Donny Hathaway. "I didn't think it would be for Ariel. I thought it would be for one of the sisters, or something." When she got the script, she realised what role she was up for.

## 'THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN YOU SIT WITH BEYONCÉ, AND SHE'S A REGULAR PERSON. IT'S COOL. THEN YOU SEE HER BECOME A SUPERHERO ON STAGE'

She flew to New York, where Marshall and the producer John DeLuca talked to her about her family, calmed her nerves, and asked if she would rather sing or act first. "I'm comfortable singing, so I was like, 'Well, maybe I'll sing first.' I just closed my eyes, and sang the song Part of Your World, and I remember opening them and seeing them crying. I remember instantly being scared that I had done something wrong." You thought they were bad tears? "I thought, oh no! Then I realised, quickly, that they had liked it."

Filming took place at Pinewood Studios, in Slough, about 20 miles west of London. It was supposed to begin in 2020, but almost as soon as Bailey arrived, the pandemic meant filming had to stop. When it restarted, she found she was alone a lot of the time. The city was largely closed. "Everything was shut down, it was almost like a ghost town. I had been staying close to Canary Wharf, by the water. I had said to myself, I want to be by one of the elements, so let me get by the river. That made me happy, to at least be able to wake up and see the water every day," she says, in what might be one of the most romantic descriptions of Canary Wharf ever uttered. During her spare time, she made jewellery, and briefly set up an Etsy store to sell it. "Then it just got overwhelming. I was like, I have to stop, I can't send all of these out!"

Filming required her to be in the air more than it did in the water. She was in a harness, pulled up high, simulating a swimming motion. "That's how you get the sense of, like, I have no legs, and I'm a mermaid," she explains, sincerely.

This might be a silly question, but did you have to swim with the tail on? She did not. "But, for example, when I'm pulling Prince Eric on to the shore, for the first time, I had to wear my tail. Because it was all about proportions. You know, she's very long, and much bigger than Eric."

Does it feel odd that the film is finally going to be out in the world? "Honestly, yes. I think the delay tricked my brain into thinking: oh yeah, that was a fever dream, that was crazy, maybe it'll never come out. Now that I'm starting to see the trailers and the teasers, I'm like: who is that person I'm looking at? Wow, she feels so much different to who I am now."

How is she different? "I was very shy, I almost felt like I was – and still am, in a way – in my shell. And, you know, it took a lot of courage and confidence, and me saying to myself, 'You can do this', because I think, as women, we do doubt ourselves a lot."

She had done some acting before; her biggest role had been on the sitcom Grown-ish, where she and Chlöe played siblings at university, compared in the show to "the twins from Tyler Perry's The Shining". But this was something else. She learned a lot, and learned it quickly. Melissa McCarthy, who plays the new Ursula, was a revelation. "She comes on set and says: 'This is what I need, this is what I don't need.' I watched her, and I was like, wow, you can do that?"

"That girl has got roots down and she sings from her heart," McCarthy told a US chatshow last year, adding that she, too, burst into tears when she heard Bailey's version of Part of Your World for the first time. "She's a remarkable young woman."

At 23, Bailey seems to have fulfilled many of her dreams. After The Little Mermaid, she was cast as the young Nettie in the forthcoming musical adaptation of The Color Purple. She got to go home to Atlanta for a few months to film it. "I guess I'm just trying to adopt certain characteristics about these women that I play, that teach me a lot about who I want to be."

Given the pressure, I'm struck by how serene she seems. "Really? That's something that my sister has tried to pull out of me. I feel like with this industry, it's easy to get caught up in the hoopla, but I always like to remind myself, none of this really matters," she says, sweetly, gratefully, peacefully, with all the warmth and loveliness that a Disney princess should possess ●

*The Little Mermaid is released on 26 May.*

*Illustration: Justin Metz*

# THE BOTTLE JOB

In 2021, a mysterious couple sat down for dinner at one of Spain's best restaurants. When they left, €1.6m worth of wine had vanished, including a vintage from 1806. *Sam Jones* goes on the trail

WASN'T IT A LITTLE ODD, thought the night manager, that the woman in room 107 should be peckish so soon after finishing the hotel's 14-course tasting menu, a paean to the pig featuring tuna belly with red lard, scallops and pig's trotters, pork jowl pudding with caviar, and Iberian meatballs with cod tripe that had concluded, inevitably, with chocolate and coffee served with aged ham. In the eight years he had spent in the elegant gloom of Atrio, a luxury restaurant and hotel in Cáceres, three hours' drive south-west of Madrid, the night manager could recall only two similar requests. "People sometimes ask for a herbal tea, or a coffee, or a glass of something," he would recall in court later. "But asking for something to eat? That was very, very odd."

The night manager said he was sorry, but the kitchen was closed. Three times the guest asked if he couldn't rustle up a little something and three times he politely refused. "But then I thought: 'This is a five-star hotel, I must serve her.'" The hungry woman acceped his offer of a salad and asked how long it would take. Fifteen minutes, he told her, then he left reception and went to the kitchen. It was 2.10am on Wednesday 27 October 2021.

What the manager did not know – and what would not become painfully evident until 12 hours later – was that the woman in 107 was not who she claimed to be. Nor was her dinner companion. At the moment the manager was assembling the salad, the couple were engaged in a meticulously planned attempt to relieve one of the world's finest restaurant cellars of its greatest treasures in a €1.6m wine theft that would make headlines around the world, trigger an international police operation and end, two months ago, with lengthy prison terms.

Top of the pair's list that night was a rare and long-lived Château d'Yquem, a bottle whose pale gold tint had darkened to tawny in the two centuries since it was created in 1806, a year that began with Admiral Lord Nelson's state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral in London and ended with the premiere in Vienna of Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D major. While the woman distracted the night manager, the man slipped down to the empty reception desk, from where he took a keycard that, he hoped, would open Atrio's 45,000-bottle cellar. When it did not, he rang his partner, telling her to buy him more time. The phone in reception rang again.

"It was her asking for pudding," the night manager said. "I told her they were specially made and I wasn't a cook, but offered her some cut-up fruit. She asked how long it would take. I said the same time as the salad."

As the manager arranged the fruit on a small plate and took the order up to 107, the man crept back to reception and located one of the master keycards. With it, he opened the cellar door and helped himself.

All was quiet until about 5.30am, when the lift doors opened on reception level. Something had come up, the pair from 107 said, and they needed to check out early. They settled the bill and declined a taxi, asking instead which road would take them to Seville. The manager opened the front door and the pair strolled out into the pre-dawn silence. "That was the last I saw of them," he said. "He had two big bags and a rucksack on his back."

That, too, was odd. The woman had checked in with only a rucksack that weighed practically nothing. The man, who had arrived a few hours later, had no luggage at all and had not been registered as an overnight guest.

The cost of their stay became apparent at about 1.20pm that day when one of Atrio's sommeliers noticed the cellar door was open and bottles were missing. The sommelier asked Toño Pérez, Atrio's co-owner and chef, if they had been moved as part of recent works to replace the cellar's lighting system. Immediately suspecting something was up, Pérez went down to see for himself. When he came back up, he told his partner, José Polo, to get off the video conference call he was on. The couple, who have been together since they were 16 and who opened Atrio in 1986, had been robbed.

"I went down and I saw it," Polo tells me at a table in Atrio's tasteful, muted dining room. "Those bastards had stolen the most special stuff. I went to the Château d'Yquem and I saw seven bottles had gone."

Among them was the caramel-coloured 1806 Yquem, bought at auction in London in 2000 and now valued at €350,000. Then there were 19 bottles of Romanée-Conti grand cru and several of Montrachet. All in all, 45 bottles had been stolen, with a total value, according to Atrio's wine list, of €1,648,500. Polo began to cry.

"Our customers are wonderful – you never imagine people will come here and steal from you," he says as he drinks a Campari and orange at a window table in Atrio's dining room, the dregs of that shock still in his voice. "That 1806 Yquem is a part of us." Although it was offered in the wine list, Polo insists he and Pérez would never have sold the bottle: "Not even for €1m."

Polo, a dapper, solicitous man in his early 60s who addresses his staff politely and by name, tries to find the right word to describe how he felt. "Violated" is the closest fit. "I've spoken to people whose homes have been burgled and they used that word. They'd violated this space." The loss of the bottles – especially the Yquem – was about far more than money. "I'm sick of all the talk about money," Polo says. "Not everything is about that. You should have seen the sommeliers' faces and felt the sadness that lasted for weeks." Tours of the wine cellar are available to visitors and the sommelier who'd taken the pair round felt responsible. "But I said to him: 'What could you have done, sweetie? How could you have known they were going to take it?'" From time to time as we speak, faces loom out of the darkness as people peer through the window behind Polo, hoping for a glimpse of a five-star crime scene.

WORD OF THE THEFT was quick to spread, the media unable to resist a crime involving a high-value theft, a glamorous couple on the run, a town in shock and an unsolved mystery. "The Atrio thieves: a story of love, expensive wine and prison sex," panted one headline, while another talked of "The Atrio Bonnie and Clyde: a story of love, luxury and excess in the wake of a movie-style theft." Part of the story's allure lay in its setting. Despite its prestige – it was awarded a third Michelin star last November – Atrio is not your typical Spanish luxury restaurant, lying within the mighty gastronomic orbit of the Basque Country, or on a Barcelona boulevard, or a bluff overlooking the Med. It sits instead in Extremadura, the rugged south-western Spanish region known for its oak trees, cherries, ham, conquistador sons and,



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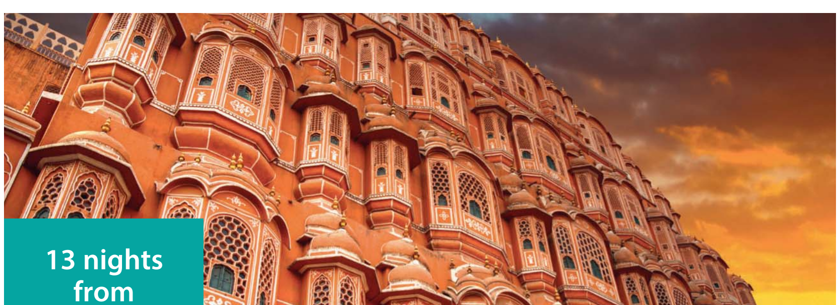

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more recently, for providing the austere backdrops to Game of Thrones and House of the Dragon.

The hotel squats in an ancient cobbled square high in Cáceres's old town. From a convent window on the other side of the plaza, cloistered nuns sell sweet delights for a few euros a dozen. Atrio's food is a little fancier and its prices higher. Breakfast is €43 a head; dinner for two, with wine, costs €565. Both can be had with the tour of the wine cellar Polo and Pérez have built over decades.

While the couple could have settled anywhere in Spain, they preferred to remain rooted in their native soil. "We're here because this is where we should be," Polo says. "This is a place that's always disdained. How come the conquistadors were from here? Because there wasn't enough to eat and they had to go to the Americas. It's always been a poor land. We wanted to do our bit."

To that end, he and Pérez have set up a non-profit foundation that brings music into local schools and helps marginalised children and those with special needs. It also works to promote Extremadura's heritage. The idea is to give back to Cáceres a little of what Cáceres has given Atrio since it opened 37 years ago. Back then, Polo knew so little about grapes and vintages that he asked a Spanish gourmet magazine for recommendations on what wines to buy. "I knew nothing," he says. "My grandmother told me that during the civil war, there wasn't much food so parents would dip their children's dummies in wine and sugar to keep them quiet."

Before long the neophyte became an evangelist. "I like wine," he says with a degree of understatement. "Wine is marvellous." Montrachet is his favourite, but Polo also has a soft spot for 1990s Bordeaux: "It's like talking directly to God without going through St Peter." Below us, in row on row and pile on pile, sit the bottles that make such divine dialogue possible. Despite its careful lighting and pale blond wood, there is something of the cathedral crypt about Atrio's hallowed cellar, which lies beyond a door that will – post-theft – open only if a state-of-the-art scanner approves your face.

All manner of relics are displayed on its densely stacked shelves: here a 1935 Château Ausone, there a 1945 Château Latour and an 1891 González Byass sherry. It is little wonder Atrio's wine list – an immaculately bound work of art that can be bought as a souvenir for €85 – weighs in, according to my kitchen scales, at 2.2kg.

One corner of the cellar holds the Yquems, a vertical row of bottles at whose very top is an old, broken one wrapped in plastic. Beneath it is the empty shelf that once held the 1806 Yquem, a void that has the poignancy of the grownup child's abandoned room in the family home. Its absence still haunts Polo. "What else has man created that's still alive after two hundred years? Is there anything else? How do you put a value on that?"

LOT 264 OF THE SALE of "finest and rarest wines, whisky and cigars" held at Christie's in London on 7 December 2000 was described by the auction house as a "rare 19th-century Yquem" from a "superb family cellar". Polo was jubilant when he managed to buy it for £6,380, a little under its lower estimate. Early the next month, he flew to London to pick it up, along with 23 other bottles he had bought at the sale. After swaddling them in bubble wrap and placing them in two Benetton bags, he carefully stowed them in the overhead bins of the plane home. Once safely back in Spain, the bottles were wrapped in clingfilm to protect their labels.

One day towards the end of January 2001, when Polo was on the phone to his insurers, an Atrio sommelier asked if he could put the newly purchased bottles to rest in a wooden box. Had he not been engrossed in the call, Polo would have said he'd see to it himself. "But I carried on talking, then someone came up from the cellar saying: 'No way! A bottle's been broken. How did this happen?' I told the insurance company I'd call back … It wasn't any bottle that had been broken: it was *the* bottle."

The hand-blown neck of the 1806 Yquem bottle was a little longer than the others and had become wedged in the box. When the sommelier tried to free it, the neck



snapped. As did something inside Polo. "I just wanted to die. It was as if all the lights had been switched off."

In tears, he rang a wine dealer friend called François Passaga, who also began to cry – but then asked how much of the wine had been lost. "I said I didn't know. 'Well, shit, go and find out,' he said." When Polo saw the break was only in the neck and that the clingfilm had kept almost all the wine in the bottle, Passaga suggested they call Château d'Yquem for advice. By 4pm that day, they had precise instructions: empty out another bottle of sauternes; wash it well; put in the Yquem; don't let the wine lie down and touch the new cork; and keep it cold.

The following day, Polo and Passaga drove to Bordeaux and, "with an enormous sense of shame", approached the chateau. "'Hello,' we said in French. 'It's the Spaniards with the broken bottle of Château d'Yquem.'"

After checking the bottle's provenance, the chateau's then manager, Count Alexandre de Lur Saluces, and head wine-maker, Sandrine Garbay, set about rescuing the wine. A quick tasting revealed the contents of the bottle had survived their first contact with air in more than two centuries. A replacement bottle was sourced from the cellars, then filled with glass beads to raise the liquid level and reduce the amount of oxygen. The 1806 was decanted into the new bottle and a new label produced, which read: "Reconditioned by Yquem in 2001, following an accident." It was signed by Garbay.

Relieved and overwhelmed, Polo and Passaga returned to Spain with the reconditioned 1806 and its broken bottle. "It was an emotional rollercoaster," Polo says. "I cried all the way there and all the way back."

Jane Anson, a wine expert and author of the 700-page Inside Bordeaux guide, is not surprised at the fuss over the ill-fated bottle, even if, according to the broker house records from the early 19th century, it wasn't a fine vintage. "It definitely isn't that this is a great year because their summing up was that 1806 was an ordinary harvest and a poor year," Anson says. "People are not buying that Château d'Yquem expecting the greatest vintage ever bottled – it goes way beyond that."

Given the momentous events of 1806, Anson, like Polo, can understand "the pure excitement of having a wine made when that history was happening". But there are other, less lofty considerations. "If you're going to pick any 220-year-old wine that might still taste OK, this is probably the single possibility because it's sweet and

**'WHAT ELSE IS STILL ALIVE AFTER 200 YEARS? HOW DO YOU VALUE THAT?'**



'Those bastards had stolen the most special stuff': Toño Perez (on left) and José Polo at Atrio, from whose cellar (above) 45 bottles were taken

BEN ROBERTS/THE GUARDIAN

sweet wines last," Anson says. "If they're good quality, made in the way Yquem is, they have a good chance of going a century without even worrying about it – so you have a slight chance that two centuries on it can still give some pleasure, even if it's not a great vintage."

How do you put a price on such a bottle? "There is no price because how many bottles of this are out there? You've got a ton of forged wines of that age, but it seems this was an actual real bottle. It's just so rare, and it's worth what somebody is prepared to pay for it."

THE QUESTION OF VALUE came up often during the short trial that began in court eight of Cáceres's huge, modern Palace of Justice at the end of February. Before the three judges sat Priscila Lara Guevara, 29, a former beauty pageant contestant from Mexico, and her partner, Constantin Gabriel Dumitru, 47, a Romanian-Dutch man whose eye for fine wines, it would turn out, was matched only by his longstanding aversion to paying for them.

According to reports in the Spanish press, the couple met on a Barcelona beach in 2017, when she was studying drama and he was cleaning the windows of some of Madrid's more vertiginous buildings. The pair, who were captured on CCTV as they left Atrio on 27 October 2021, travelled through the Netherlands and Slovenia before Croatian police acting on a European arrest warrant detained them at the Karasovići border crossing between Croatia and Montenegro on 18 July last year.

Spain's Policía Nacional had been on their trail after phone records showed the mobile number Guevara had put on her registration form at Atrio – and had used to make the reservation – had received a call from another mobile at the exact time of the theft. That call came from a phone belonging to Dumitru; both mobiles were registered to him, albeit under an alias.

Geolocation put the two phones in the hotel in the early hours of that Wednesday morning, while DNA samples from the bathroom of room 107 were matches for Guevara and Dumitru. Police also ran his fingerprints through a shared European law enforcement database. Someone with the same prints had been arrested for theft in Portugal in March 2008.

Both pleaded not guilty to theft and declined to testify, leaving the judges to rely on the evidence of Atrio staff, police, forensic experts and the insurance company's loss adjuster. Polo, who had chatted to the "very nice" couple briefly as they dined, remembered a woman in black-framed glasses and a wig, and a strong-looking man with light brown hair. Looking at the defendants, he saw a woman in white with blond, wavy hair and a bespectacled man whose shaved head shone under the courtroom


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lights. Were they the same people? “Erm, he had hair then,” Polo said. “I can’t be 100% sure. It could be them.”

The defendants’ counsel was a cool, combative lawyer called Sylvia Córdoba, who frequently irked the presiding judge with her persistence on her clients’ behalf, even as the circumstantial evidence piled up: the witness identifications, the CCTV footage, the DNA, the phone activity, the discovery of a getaway car and the phone conversations with an apparent middleman in which Dumitru spoke of his difficulty in shifting the bottles and broached the possibility of swapping some for a Mercedes GLS. Again and again, Córdoba insisted there was no single piece of damning evidence against her clients. She said the DNA could have been transferred to room 107 from elsewhere, questioned the reliability of some witness testimony and accused police of cherrypicking evidence and violating her clients’ fundamental rights. She quizzed the loss adjuster on his knowledge of wine prices, and argued that the 45 stolen bottles, wrapped in Atrio towels to stop them clinking, could not have fitted into three bags, as purportedly shown in the hotel CCTV footage. “I’ve done tests,” she said, “and you can’t get 45 bottles in two sports bags and a rucksack. It’s impossible.” It was an experiment she chose not to replicate in court.

In her closing speech, Córdoba implored the judges to look beyond the headlines and focus on the facts. “My clients aren’t Bonnie and Clyde. They’re Constantín and Priscila, a happy couple who were travelling through Europe when they were arrested in Croatia last year.”

A few minutes later came the moment everyone had been waiting for: Dumitru addressed the judges as the trial ended, his words strangely defiant. “After all that’s happened, I wanted to say I can’t get my head around the fact that a man with a five-star, two Michelin-star hotel – and a cellar with historic wines – doesn’t have a camera inside it. I don’t need to talk about what happened in there. If an insurance guy comes to your house, he’ll say you need a camera here and here so you can get back what’s taken. But there was none of that.”

Dumitru insisted there was nothing to link him directly with the theft and also asked where the bottles were, “because if I was the thief, I’d want to know”. His co-defendant, perhaps wisely, chose not to speak.

Neither this speech nor their lawyer’s perseverance persuaded the judges: they found the pair guilty of theft, sentencing Dumitru to four and a half years in prison and Guevara to four. They were also ordered to pay back the €753,454,46 the insurance company had compensated Atrio. The judges, who “harboured not the slightest doubt as to the authorship of the crime”, noted that Dumitru had lived in a wealthy part of Madrid despite “not having any paid work” and had been arrested 18 times in Spain and once in Portugal. Between 2017 and 2021, Spanish courts had convicted him of four counts of theft and one of domestic violence.

Of particular significance, the judges added, was that Dumitru had been arrested in Madrid on 14 October 2021 – less than two weeks before the Atrio robbery – in connection with the theft from an upmarket restaurant and wine shop of two bottles of Romanée-Conti with an estimated value of €40,000. Given that 19 bottles of the same wine had been taken from Atrio, “he had a clear preference for this label”. According to witnesses, he had been accompanied that day by a “woman of Latin origin, with dark skin, who was younger than him”.

THREE DAYS AFTER the Cáceres verdict, I visit another of Dumitru’s old haunts. The central Madrid barrio of Salamanca, a neighbourhood of cashmere, weimaraners and Maseratis, has a definite whiff of Knightsbridge about it. As well as galleries and designer furniture stores, it is home to Lavinia, a cavernous wine shop sandwiched between Valentino and Celine, and three doors down from Chanel. At 3.55pm on Tuesday 7 May 2019, a regular customer wearing a long-sleeved shirt, gilet and woollen cap – despite Madrid being 22.9C – entered and greeted staff. After being shown to Cava





The empty shelf (above left) that once held the 1806 Yquem stolen by Priscila Guevara and Constantin Dumitru (in court in February, above)

BEN ROBERTS/THE GUARDIAN; EUROPA PRESS/GETTY

14, a temperature-controlled area accessible only by a scanner programmed with staff fingerprints, Dumitru asked a sommelier to look up a few wines on Lavinia’s database before choosing a €50 bottle of French white, ambling around the shop for a while before paying. It was only later that staff noticed the €5,250 bottle of Balvenie 40-year-old whisky had disappeared.

“That bottle was the only one to reach Madrid and we hadn’t had it long,” branch manager Juan Antonio Herrero tells me over coffee in Lavinia’s bar. “We started looking through the camera footage and that’s when we saw him. The bottle was there and then it wasn’t.” Closer examination showed Dumitru had tried to move the camera trained on the bottle while the sommelier was out of sight looking up wines on the computer.

Herrero’s colleague Mónica Velasco, who had served Dumitru at least three times and recalled his fondness for €60 bottles of Condrieu La Loye, couldn’t believe the thief was the friendly, courteous foreign gentleman who looked “a bit like Brad Pitt”. “I saw the footage and went: ‘Oof! I can’t believe it! How could it be that guy, who was so nice?’ Obviously thefts happen, and later you realise you saw the thief on the way in, or someone saw them on the way out. But shit! I’d spoken to him.”

Herrero was struck by the thief’s insouciance, in particular the manner in which he had left Lavinia. “He got to the till, paid in cash and was given the receipt and a bag. But as he was leaving, he saw someone coming in and went out *exactly* as they arrived. Why? I figured it’s because he’s a total professional. He did it in case the bottle in his coat beeped. That way he had two excuses: one, the person coming in could have set off the alarm; two, he had his bottle, bag and receipt. But there was no beep and he left with no problems.”

If you or I were attempting to exit a shop with a very pricy bottle of whisky hidden about our person, Herrero adds, “we’d be wanting to get out, sweating, dying of nerves. You wouldn’t take a little stroll around and chit-chat with the sommelier. He’s very cool-headed and analytical, keeping an ace up his sleeve just in case it went sideways. I haven’t seen any other thief do that.”

That same sang-froid, however, would prove to be Dumitru’s undoing. Three months later, in August 2019, he returned to Lavinia, affable as ever, and asked to be shown into Cava 14. Velasco saw him and followed him into the secure area, passing her colleague a note on

**‘I SAW THE FOOTAGE AND WENT, OOF! HOW COULD IT BE THAT NICE GUY?’**

which she had hastily scrawled: “It’s the guy who’s stealing from us. Stay calm and try to keep him there.” She called the police, who arrived just as he was leaving with the €30 bottle of Portuguese wine he had bought.

On 28 October 2022 – while he was awaiting trial for the Atrio theft – a Madrid court found Dumitru guilty of stealing the Balvenie, sentenced him to a year in prison and ordered him to pay Lavinia and an insurance company damages totalling €5,250. The judge said the sentence was imposed “because this was not a simple, opportunistic theft. The accused had frequented the establishment, inducing the employee to open the door of the Cava with the aim of taking a high-value bottle. This planning calls for a greater penal punishment.”

Not long after the Cáceres trial had ended, I emailed Sylvia Córdoba to ask after her clients and their legal plans. “They’re a little downhearted,” she said, “but still optimistic … We’re going to appeal in the hope of securing an acquittal, or at least a reduced sentence.”

The Balvenie has never turned up and nor have Atrio’s 45 bottles. Anson suspects the 1806 Yquem has gone for good. As the bottle is too famous ever to come up for auction, she guesses it is sitting in a private collection – or has already been drunk. “The great shame with wine is it’s pretty easy to hide the evidence. I expect whoever’s got it won’t have thrown away the bottle, though. So maybe one day we’ll find out where it went.”

Until then, the empty shelf in Atrio’s cellar will continue to ache. Polo knows his beloved Yquem will probably never return. Like Anson, he believes it may already have been drunk by someone far more powerful and rich than either Guevara or Dumitru. “Right from the beginning, I’ve thought they were hired to do it,” he told me before the trial began. “The dangerous ones are the ones who hired them. If they say nothing and end up in prison, I think that’ll prove I’m right. If they speak and cut a deal to return the bottles to get a reduced sentence, then I’m wrong.” It appears he is not wrong.

As service begins and Atrio’s dining room fills, Polo says he and Pérez have moved on from the theft and all it brought in its wake. These days, they are focusing on what they have accomplished rather than what they have lost. “We’ve achieved our life’s dream,” he says. “If you were to ask me whether I’d prefer the three stars or the bottle back, then, fuck, I don’t know. But we’ve got the three stars now and the story of the bottle is ours.”

Once again, he tells me he would never have parted with that venerable bottle made in France, bought in England, broken in Spain, resuscitated in its homeland, then taken – in all likelihood never to be seen again – from a cellar in Extremadura. “It would still be down there,” he says. “In a way, it’s almost like it still is.” ●

# CLEARING THE AIR

Standing up against Trump and for the environment has made Sadiq Khan a target for the far right. He talks to *Simon Hattenstone* about death threats, PTSD – and why he wants six terms as London mayor

Sadiq Khan walks into the restaurant. If you had never set eyes on him before you'd guess he was a politician within five seconds. Ten, and you'd have him down as mayor. There's the fast walk, the faster talk, the quality coat, the handshake, the entourage. I've been sitting in the empty London restaurant with his personal adviser and suddenly it's half-full – people discreetly dotted at any number of tables. I point to them.

"That's my security. It's the same level of protection the prime minister and the king receive," says the former Labour MP and current mayor of London. The diminutive Khan is no stranger to bigging himself up, but he's not doing so now. He sounds embarrassed and regretful. Six years ago he was trolled on Twitter by Donald Trump and that's when the attacks intensified. But there had been plenty before then.

How has round-the-clock security changed his life? "There's no spontaneity – from playing five-a-side to popping for a pint of milk. I was clear I'd accept protection only if I could carry on doing the stuff I do. So me going to Carnival is a nightmare for them, doing Pride, going to concerts, using public transport, cycling, going to mosque. I'll be watching a film and they're three rows behind me. It's a bit weird!" In fact, as I discover later, the threats Khan has faced have had considerably more impact than to make his life a bit weird.

He seems in good form, though. He asks who I've interviewed recently. I mention Smokey Robinson and he's off – singing The Tears of a Clown, talking about seeing Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross live, and his love of soul music. The waiter arrives. Khan looks at my flat white dismissively. "What's that? That's very posh. I'm from south London so I'm going for a skinny Americano." It's classic Khan – playing the geezer and not getting it quite right. To his credit, he's told me every time we've met how uncool his two daughters think he is.

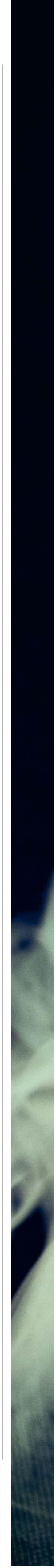
His feud with Trump started in 2015 when the then presidential candidate's pledge to ban Muslims from the US was criticised as "outrageous" by the then London mayoral candidate. Khan said he hoped Trump "loses badly". Fast forward to June 2017 and the attacks on Borough Market and London Bridge. Trump tweeted: "At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!'" What Khan had actually said was that the public should not be alarmed by the increased police presence on the streets. Khan called on the government to cancel Trump's state visit to the UK. Two weeks later, pedestrians outside Finsbury Park mosque were driven into in an Islamophobic attack, killing one person. "The terrorist was looking for me," Khan says. "He couldn't find me so he decided to target Jeremy Corbyn and Muslims. Every time Trump says something horrible about me there's a massive increase in hatred towards me on social media." Two years later, a man murdered 51 people at the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand. "The killer mentioned me as well. Then there are people who follow Daesh [Islamic State] and al-Qaida who think you can't be a Muslim and a westerner. I get it from both sides in relation to the death threats."

When he stood as mayor in 2016, his Conservative rival Zac Goldsmith launched a shocking campaign many condemned as "dog-whistle" politics. He wrote to families with Indian and Sri Lankan names under the headline "Sadiq Khan Will Put London's Future And Your Community At Risk," saying, "We cannot let him experiment with these radical policies." The campaign never mentioned that Khan is Muslim and of Pakistani heritage, but it didn't need to. Despite the smears, he emerged triumphant.

Khan has won election after election (three terms as MP for Tooting, twice so far as mayor) and has made enemies galore along the way. As he tells me numerous times, unlike many politicians he is not afraid to make tough decisions. Take his time as mayor. It may be best remembered for introducing the ultra-low emission zone (Ulez), protests from those who drive for a living and rightwing accusations of being an enemy of the people and a hypocrite (for flying while championing the environment), and promoting a regressive tax.

Ulez was actually the brainchild of Boris Johnson in 2013, but he made sure he would be nowhere near the mayoralty when it started. Khan introduced it in 2019, then extended it, and has arguably paid the price for his "war on motorists" – Ulez, low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) and cycle lanes. Black cab-drivers brought Parliament

*Portraits: Sebastian Nevols*





Square to a standstill in 2019 after Khan banned them from part of the capital, and in 2020 they heckled him outside City Hall, shouting "Give us back our streets", "You're not the mayor of London, you're the destroyer of London" and "Black cab lives matter".

Now he has written a book called Breathe: Tackling the Climate Emergency, about his mission to make London a cleaner, safer city. It's an appropriate title. When Khan talks, you wish he'd do just that. Breathe between sentences, or at least topics. But he is relentless. He's the anti-Johnson. While the former prime minister is all bluster, Khan pummels you with facts.

Breathe is both personal and political. For Khan, everything is. At its most powerful, it tells the story of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, the nine-year-old Londoner who died in 2013 after an acute asthma attack and was the first person in the UK to have air pollution cited as a cause of death. It is personal in the sense that when Khan was training for the London marathon he started to struggle with his breathing and was diagnosed with adult-onset asthma, which he attributes to air pollution. Breathe is the story of his battle to clear the air.

"If I got asthma by running in the city, how many people don't realise they are stuck with breathing nitrogen oxide? You can't see it, but it's damaging every cell and organ. If you and I were speaking in the 19th century, we would smell the great stink. Then last century the great smog led to thousands of deaths. The problem is, you can't see or smell today's air pollution."

His track record as an environmentalist was shoddy, he says. "I voted for a third runway at Heathrow. I went from driving a black Saab convertible to a Land Rover when my daughters were little, to running the marathon and … " It's a typical Khan sentence. He's so keen to get to the next point that he doesn't bother concluding the current one. I think he means he went from driving his Land Rover to running the marathon and caring about the climate. But he gets distracted by something else important to him. "I raised lots of money running the marathon, and beat Ed Balls and Andy Burnham." There is not an uncompetitive bone in his body.

He compares the impact Ella had on him with that of Stephen Lawrence. Both had mothers – Doreen Lawrence and Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah – who have fought tirelessly to ensure their children didn't die in vain. "The reason I adore and was inspired by Doreen is that but for the grace of God I could have been Stephen. Rosamund or Doreen could have been my mum. What was Ella going through? Rosamund was advised to take tissues from her just before she was buried to examine them later on. And she discovered through experts that every day her daughter had a severe asthma attack, the same day there was bad traffic air pollution. Had she known that she could have taken action. And here's the thing that makes me really angry: Boris Johnson knew that, because he'd commissioned a report that was buried away which showed the impact polluted air has on some of London's most vulnerable communities. The second inquest into Ella's death, with all the evidence and all the experts, concludes air pollution is causative of death. So the book is trying to educate people about air pollution. Not in a gloom and doom way, but in a hopeful way that you can do things about it."

I'm still waiting for Khan to take a breath. "Listen, Simon, in just two years we managed to reduce the toxicity in a centralised city by almost 50%. I spoke to experts from around the world who say they have never seen a policy so effective in such a short time. When I first became mayor, King's College said it will take 193 years to make our air within legal limits. Now they're saying you can do it by 2025. So if you're fatalistic, don't be. There is something you can do. Here's the proof."

And … breathe. Interviewing Khan feels like watching Question Time with a solitary guest. The monologue is Khan at his migraine-inducing best – the verbal tics, the stats, the willingness to make political capital out of a powerful story. But it's also important and impressive. The clean air (human rights) bill – also known as Ella's Law – would enshrine the human right to healthy air in UK law. Khan has repeatedly called on the government to support the bill. Health officials estimate the death toll from human-made air pollution in the UK is between 29,000 and 43,000 every year.

His environmental record is far from perfect. Khan has been criticised over his support for the Silvertown tunnel, a £2bn road-building programme in east London. While he argues it will make London's air cleaner, many independent health, climate and transport experts believe that it will increase traffic and air pollution in some of the poorest boroughs in the country. He is constantly hammered for his commitment to LTNs even by Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, who believes they lead to more congestion on major roads. "All they have done is diverted traffic. I told Sadiq this was going to happen. But no-no-no-no-no. The powers that be knew better. Sadiq knows I'll always tell him the truth." Nevertheless, she says, she can't speak highly enough of "the old man" and what he's done to highlight Ella's story and the dangers of air pollution. Khan is only 52. Why does she call him the old man? She bursts out laughing. "He'll kill me for calling him that! I saw some pictures of him when he was a lawyer and he had dark brown hair. I didn't recognise him. Oh my God!"

Adoo-Kissi-Debrah has seen an early copy of Breathe. "Sadiq said, 'I'm going to mention your daughter, is that OK?' I just shrugged and said yes. But I wasn't expecting *this*! The book keeps Ella's name alive and I'm glad she's inspired him. In highlighting air pollution and its impact on us in terms of cardiovascular strokes, dementia, suicide, teenage depression and on children even before they are born, Sadiq's done immense good."

KHAN ENTERED POLITICS with a perfectly pitched backstory – the working-class son of a bus driver father and seamstress mother, one of eight siblings (seven boys) who had to fight to make themselves heard (that's why he talks so fast, he says). He was born in Tooting, raised in Tooting, became MP for Tooting and still lives in Tooting with his wife, Saadiya, and daughters Anisah and Ammarah. He and his brothers experienced so much racism that they took up boxing (one coached Olympic silver medalist Joe Joyce). Khan studied law at the University of North London (now London Met) and went to work for the eminent human rights lawyer Louise Christian in 1994, later becoming a partner in the firm. As chair of the human rights organisation Liberty in the early 00s, Khan campaigned against imprisonment without trial, then in 2005, as a new MP, voted against Labour's proposal to hold terrorism suspects for 90 days without charge. He says his rebellion made an enemy of Tony Blair and stymied his career in the Commons, but he had to hold true to his beliefs. Three years later, however, he was a whip responsible for pushing through 42-day detention without charges. It's hard to see him doing a similar U-turn on the climate.

Last December, Khan announced he would seek an



unprecedented third term as mayor. The day we meet a YouGov poll shows his ratings are down, with 35% of Londoners thinking he is doing a good job and 50% saying he is doing badly (marginally better than the ratings for Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer). Could his stance on air pollution cost him the election in 2024? "I don't think it will. I stood in the last election saying I want to be the greenest mayor our city's ever had, and I got the biggest vote a sitting mayor's ever received." The only time polls matter, he says, are on election day.

Khan may now be as closely associated with London as previous Labour mayor Ken Livingstone. And, like Livingstone, you sense he's aware of every pothole and dodgy traffic light. But the city has changed hugely since Livingstone's time. Although its overall population is rising, the number of people aged 25-39, and most likely to start families, is falling because of housing costs. Most young people simply can't afford to live in London any more. Inevitably, this will lead to a city famous for its diversity becoming the preserve of a moneyed elite.

Is London dying? Khan doesn't answer directly, but his response suggests he knows it is in need of urgent resuscitation. "One of the reasons my parents chose this country was so their kids were better off than they were. Now, for the first time in a long time, our children may be less well off than we are, for a variety of reasons – housing prices, Brexit and so forth. That's the bad news." Now for the good news, naturally provided in the form of stats – 36,000 affordable houses a year built under him as opposed to 25,000 under Johnson; more council houses completed than at any time since the 70s; a proposed rent freeze in London. Despite the progress, Khan himself said in 2017 that London needed 66,000 new homes a year to address years of underinvestment, chronic housing shortage and growing population. Back then, the capital's population was 8.92 million; today it is 9.65 million.

But for all the stats, schemes and proposals, he admits the city is in crisis. "If I was speaking to you 20 years ago, I'd be saying, listen, Simon, I'm worried about cleaners and bus drivers not being able to live in London. Now it's nurses, doctors, teachers." Again, he says his politics is informed by the personal. "My children have finished their degrees and are living at home. By 2030, one in three 30-year-olds will still be living with their mum and dad. I love my kids but I want them to leave at some stage, right? So we've got to fix the housing crisis. I was 24 when I bought my first home. That's unthinkable now." The biggest problem for him, he says, is he can spend so little of the taxes raised in the city. "Fact: I get to spend 7%, New York gets to spend 50%, Tokyo 70%."

Housing is not the only crisis in London. Violent crime, as ever, is an issue. The Daily Mail recently ran an article with the headline "Sadiq's London: More than 150 teens have been murdered in the capital since Khan became Mayor". Then there is the calamitous state of the Metropolitan police. In September 2021, Met officer Wayne Couzens was sentenced to a whole life term for the kidnap, murder and rape of Sarah Everard. In February 2022 Met commissioner Cressida Dick resigned after Khan gave her an ultimatum, saying she wasn't doing enough to reform the force. Last September, a government-commissioned report by Sir Thomas Winsor branded his actions "irrational", alleging he had not followed "due process" and had treated her unfairly.

Did you act unlawfully, I ask him today. "No, it wasn't unlawful. If it was unlawful where's the court case; where's the legal challenge? It was the right thing to do and I stand by it." Again, he says, he was prepared to take a tough decision. "When I lost confidence in the commissioner, I was by myself. The prime minister was against me, the home secretary was against me, Tom Winsor was against me. And you know what? It's been a consolation to say I was vindicated." This March, Louise Casey's report into the Met concluded that it is institutionally racist, misogynistic and homophobic.

A month before Casey's report was published, former Met officer and serial rapist David Carrick was given 36 life sentences after pleading guilty to 49 charges against 12 women between 2003 and 2020. Is Khan ashamed of the Met? "I think it's a problem, yeah," he says. "I'm ashamed there's not been the progress there should have been." He talks about growing up in London, being routinely stopped by the police, like so many boys and men of colour, being told to empty his pockets despite having done nothing wrong. "It got to the point where I crossed the road when I saw a police officer coming. When I was driving my car I'd be regularly stopped by the police." In 1999 the Macpherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence labelled the Met institutionally racist. Twenty-four years on, it is institutionally misogynistic and homophobic to boot.

## 'I LOST MY MOJO. I DIDN'T HAVE CLARITY OF THINKING. I WASN'T SO SPARKY. WITHOUT A DOUBT, I WAS SUFFERING WITH PTSD'

Do his daughters trust the police? "I *tell* them to." And what do they say? "We hear you, but these are the reasons why we're nervous." What are those reasons? "We now know about Couzens and Carrick. A lot of girls and women have been touched up on tubes, have been on buses where men have been masturbating, right? In the past my daughters and their friends have reported things like this to the police and nothing much has happened. This commissioner says it's unacceptable. Every incident should be investigated."

Isn't it too late? Surely the organisation is so discredited it has to be disbanded and reconstituted, as the Royal Ulster Constabulary was in 2001? Not yet, Khan says. In fact, he argues the Met is ahead of other British forces in that it has acknowledged and is addressing its failings. But he does accept this is its final chance. "I think it is possible to reform the police. But it may get to the situation, in two years' time, when we've not seen the progress we need to see. It may then be the case that we do need to relook into this. What we can't do, though, is have an artificial rebranding."

HE DOESN'T JUST WANT to win a third term as mayor, Khan tells me; he's hoping for six in total. I assume he's joking, then realise he's not. It becomes apparent that this is how long he thinks it will take to revive the city. What would he hope to have achieved by the end of a third term? "By then we'll have had a Labour government for at least three years, so we're going to see even more progress on fixing the housing crisis, the air quality, and you'll have started to see the fruits of the reformed police service and fire service, and more jobs created in London." And at the end of the sixth term? "You'll see a London that can have our children feeling they have a future rather than being worried about what the future holds." As he says, he's always been an optimist.

Khan never seems to rest. I'm knackered just listening to him. Does he ever feel exhausted? "No. I mean, I'm tired sometimes of course. But I'm doing something that for the last 13 years people with my politics have not been able to do – bring about change because you've won elections. I'm not a doctor, police officer or firefighter, but I'm saving lives by being the mayor. By improving the quality of air in London."

I ask if he still runs. "I did 12k last weekend, 7k a few days ago. Another thing I didn't realise until the pandemic is that it helped not just my physical fitness but also my mental fitness." Then the seemingly invincible Khan says something surprising. He tells me he really suffered in the pandemic. "I lost my mojo. I didn't have clarity of thinking. I wasn't so sparky. I wasn't inspiring my team." Did he see a therapist? "No. I've got friends who are doctors. I spoke to Alastair Campbell about it a lot. Alastair was very helpful."

Actually, he says, it was even worse in 2017 with the Grenfell fire, terrorist attacks and death threats. "I spent a lot of time with bereaved families and that has an impact on your mental health. I got help in understanding PTSD. A number of things can trigger post-traumatic stress disorder. By the way, I'm not comparing what I'm going through to the actual victims of Grenfell Tower."

You've been suffering with PTSD? "Without a doubt. One of my best friends is a doctor and we talk about it. We play tennis and he gives me talking therapy."

What did they relate the PTSD to: the terrorist attacks, death threats, the pandemic? "I think the phrase is cumulative." Again, he caveats it. "By the way, I'm not comparing what I am going through to some of the stuff people go through – as a lawyer my clients with PTSD were asylum seekers and refugees. I would never give equivalence to what I am going through. Nor would I ever want people to feel sorry for me. I'm very privileged to do the job I do." And another caveat – this time a different type. "By the way, if this means I'm a snowflake, so be it, right? Mental health is fragile if it's not looked after. And I shouldn't be afraid to talk about it."

Apart from the time we were discussing music at the start, Khan has hardly smiled in almost two hours. He's been too busy laying out achievements, obstacles and challenges ahead. I feel as if I've gone 12 rounds with the Human Encyclopedia of City Hall. But for all the talk of six terms, I think he's worried about the next election. And for all the braggadocio there is a vulnerability – partly a fear of letting London down by losing, partly a fear of personal failure. Khan is that rare thing: a politician with a mission and vision for the community he serves.

As he gets up to leave, most of the restaurant empties. Meanwhile, formalities over, Khan has recovered his chirpiness. On the way out he stops for a chat with Ahmed, the restaurant manager. "We're having an Eid celebration in Trafalgar Square on Saturday. You should come down. There'll be thousands of us. We take a picture with everyone there." He grins. "Then we send it to Trump." And with that he's off ●

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# 'One short life forced people to face up to an invisible killer'

## An extract from Sadiq Khan's Breathe

I NEVER USED TO BE particularly "green". When I was offered a salaried partnership in a law firm, I negotiated a parking space for my Saab convertible on the same street as the office in central London, and later upgraded to a gas-guzzling Land Rover Discovery. Climate change had always seemed very far away – both geographically and temporally. It was a "tomorrow" issue rather than a "today" issue.

Then in 2014, I agreed to run the London marathon and started to encounter a problem. After a long run, I would struggle to breathe. When the wheezing turned into coughing, my GP diagnosed adult-onset asthma. I was incredulous. I was 43. I'd never had any respiratory issues. My GP said it wasn't uncommon now for people to develop the condition in adulthood, largely due to environmental factors like poor air quality. I had almost certainly developed it while training on London's roads, and I began to notice the cars idling outside schools and the exhaust fumes streaming out of gridlocked cars. Environmental problems weren't just causing problems "out there" – they had given me asthma, here in London. This wasn't just a climate crisis – it was a health crisis.

I also learned that having an asthma attack is scary. And I'm an adult. I can rationalise what's happening when I find it hard to breathe. I can't imagine how frightening it must be for a child. And there is no better way to demonstrate exactly why our toxic air matters than the story of Ella Roberta Adoo-Kissi-Debrah.

Like me, Ella was born in south London. She attended a performing arts school from the age of three and dreamed of becoming a pilot. Just before her seventh birthday, Ella began to develop a cough. She was prescribed antibiotics for a chest infection, but the expected recovery never came and she was eventually diagnosed with a unique and severe form of asthma. The condition would cause Ella to faint and have seizures, and ultimately resulted in her lungs collapsing completely. A few months later, she stopped breathing and went into intensive care.

Ella was admitted to hospital 27 times in the following 28 months. Her mother, Rosamund, resuscitated her on more than 20 occasions and she was treated in five hospitals, by numerous specialists. Then on 14 February 2013, she stopped breathing, had a seizure in the ambulance and died in hospital in the early hours of 15 February. She was nine years old.

The pathologist who carried out her postmortem said Ella had suffered from "one of the worst cases of asthma ever recorded in the UK" and the coroner who investigated her death concluded that she had died due to a severe asthma attack followed by a seizure, "possibly caused by a reaction to something in the air". But what? It was not until months later that a neighbour mentioned to Rosamund that their neighbourhood in Lewisham often had poor air quality due to its location near the busy South Circular Road. Rosamund had never before imagined Ella's condition could be linked to the air she was breathing every day. Why would she?

IT WASN'T UNTIL I WAS ELECTED mayor of London in May 2016 that I learned of Ella's case. Soon after, I met professor Stephen Holgate, an expert on air pollution and asthma. He identified the "striking association" between Ella's hospital admissions and the most dangerous episodes of air pollution around her home, and concluded that Ella's death certificate should reflect air pollution as a causative factor. He said there was a "real prospect that without unlawful levels of air pollution, Ella would not have died".

So began our campaign to have a new inquest. It took four years to get a verdict, but when it came, it was transformative. In December 2020, coroner Philip Barlow concluded that toxic air had indeed played a role in Ella's death. She became the first person in the UK to have "air pollution" listed as a cause of death.

The coroner's findings had finally answered Ella's family's questions. But the effects of his report were felt far more widely, with the ruling paving the way for others who wanted to see further action on air quality. It gave concrete evidence that toxicity from transport doesn't just stunt children's lungs – it is a killer.

Above all, the inquest verdict hammered home why it was important to take the environment seriously. Through running the marathon I learned that climate change is a force that harms all of us – not people "over there" in the distant future. And I learned that London is filled with brilliant, thoughtful, motivated people who want to do their bit. People like Rosamund, who remains a fearsome campaigner but was, first and foremost, a mum to Ella.

For me, Ella humanised why the environment matters. Her short life forced people to face up to the invisible killer we all breathe every day. Ella shows that the climate emergency is a health crisis, too, and that we cannot wait to take action to clean up our air ●

*This is an edited extract from Breathe: Tackling the Climate Emergency by Sadiq Khan, published by Hutchinson Heinemann on 25 May at £16.99. To buy a copy for £14.44, go to guardianbookshop.com. All proceeds will go to the Ella Roberta Foundation.*




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*By Polly Toynbee*



# WHAT MY PRIVILEGED START IN LIFE TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE BRITISH CLASS SYSTEM

Children know. They breathe it in early, for there's no unknowing the difference between nannies, cleaners, below-stairs people and the family upstairs. Children are the go-betweens, one foot in each world, and yet they know very well from the earliest age where they belong, where their destiny lies or, to put it crudely, who pays whom. Tiny hands are steeped young in the essence of class and caste. In nursery school, in reception they see the Harry Potter sorting hat at work. They know. And all through school those fine gradations grow clearer, more precise, more consciously knowing, more shaming, more frightening. Good liberal parents teach their children to check their privilege – useful modern phrase – but it swells up like a bubo on the nose. There's no hiding it.

I can summon up the childhood shame at class embarrassments. Aged seven like me, Maureen, with her hair pinned sideways in a pink slide, lived in a pebble-dashed council house by the water tower. They were at the other end of Lindsey, more hamlet than village, half a mile down the road from my father's pink thatched cottage set in the flat prairie lands of Suffolk, where I spent half my time, the other half in London, shuttling between divorced parents. I envied Maureen for what looked to me like a cheerful large family tumbling noisily in and out of their ever-open front door. They never asked me in, so I would hang about the door waiting for Maureen to come out and play.

Maureen and I played fairies in the cornfields, crept about scaring each other in St Peter's churchyard next door, drew hopscotch squares on the road and threw five stones on and off our knuckles. One day we had a cart, an old orange box set on pram wheels. We took it in turns pulling along the rope harness and riding in the box, up and down the flat road outside her house, shouting, "Giddy-up," and waving a stick as a mock whip.

It was my turn, I was in the box and Maureen was yoked in as my horse, she heaving me along making neighing and whinnying noises while I whooped and thrashed the air with my stick. Suddenly, there came a loud yell, a bark of command. "Maureen! Get right back in the house, now! Right now!" Her mother was standing in the doorway with the baby in her arms. "You, who do you think you are, your ladyship, getting my girl to pull you around! What makes you think she should pull you, eh? Off you go home and don't you ever, never come back round here again!" Maureen dropped the rope and scuttled back home. I thought she'd explain we were taking turns, but she was scared of her mother. I jumped out of the cart and ran all the way back to my father's house in tears of indignation. Not fair! But something else in me knew very well that there was another unfairness that wasn't about taking turns, that couldn't be explained away. Somewhere deep inside, I knew it meant Maureen would never have the turns I had. And Maureen's family knew it well enough.

MINE IS A STORY about English class, as divisive now as ever. Class-consciousness was deep-dyed in our veins, my family of liberal and leftist descent, social reformers, anti-colonialists, good internationalists, atheists, communists, socialists and social democrats. For as far as I can reach back to uncover, all sides of the family lived on the left, from my grandfather, the universal historian Arnold Toynbee, to his father who worked with Beatrice Webb on the poor laws. My great-grandfather Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, vegetarian, teetotaller and fierce anti-conservative, was in his turn following his father's example, an Australian administrator campaigning for the rights of Indigenous Australians and against capital punishment and transportation. Gilbert's wife followed the example of her mother, the ferocious "Red Countess" of Carlisle, keeper of Castle Howard, Irish home ruler, women's rights campaigner, so strictly temperance she smashed all the wine bottles in the castle's cellar.



Polly Toynbee today, right, and reporting for the Observer early in her career. Previous page: as a child in Suffolk with her father, Philip

In each generation my family were forever locked in combat with the perpetual old enemy, the forces of conservatism. But to live a well-heeled life on the left is to live with inevitable hypocrisy and painful self-awareness, with good intentions always destined to fall short of ideals, social concern never enough, struggling to be good but inevitably never good enough. I hunted hard for any redeeming twig of a working-class branch of my family tree, without success. Confessing a background of privilege comes hard to the likes of us, who can claim no "merit", no handy pulling-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps rugged path to our good professional jobs as writers, academics and teachers, set on our lucky way at a young age. Even when I idled my education away and sabotaged my chances, I still landed back on my well-shod Start-Rite feet. The shame of it is here, in my lifetime, social mobility has fallen into reverse. Birth and inheritance is destiny more certainly, the ladders up steeper and the inequality deeper than when I started out writing.

THE OLDER CHILDREN GROW, the more refined their social antennae become. You might think that at a middle-ranking girls' boarding school, Badminton School in the dull Bristol suburb of Westbury-on-Trym (nothing to do with the stately home of Badminton horse trials), every one of us belonged to the same social class. In the crude weighing scales of sociologists, that would be so, all "AB" demographic children with parents or grandparents able to stump up the middle-ranking fees. But from all of English literature, from your own life, you will know the importance of subtle gradations of social difference. This was not a school for the aristocracy, but everyone knew the significance of money, eyeing the cars and clothes each other's parents arrived in. But the devilry of English class is that money is not the whole story. More important than wealth was parental occupation, status and education, with that great gulf between profession and trade.

From high to low, there can barely be a schoolroom in England where children can't rank one another's families fairly accurately. I have often reported on the misery of desperately poor children first arriving in school, branded from day one for the wrong uniform, cheap trainers, no lunch box, no lunch money, no PE kit, nothing to write in an essay on "My Summer Holidays" or "My Christmas". The rule isn't absolute: clever, talented, funny, interesting or just plain lucky children break free of low social origins. Dim and dull richer ones do sometimes slide down in their peers' esteem. But class at my school was subtle and always unspoken: too flash parental Jaguars and fur coats were despised as vulgar. Nonetheless, the big picture of social class destiny was played out in microcosm even in my apparently homogeneous middle-class schoolroom.

Aged 12, we were divided into A streamers and B streamers; let's call them sheep and goats. Sure enough, the daughters of doctors, academics, scientists, teachers, lawyers, diplomats, a Nigerian daughter of the governor of Kaduna, an Indian politician's daughter, one bishop's daughter and any similar children of highly educated professionals glided effortlessly up to the A stream. But the daughters of trade were more likely to be relegated to the B stream, often day-girl daughters of local Bristol businessmen or farmers from around the West Country. Maybe this was unconscious bias on the school's part, or maybe they simply went by children's results, or their perceived intelligence or intellectual interests. In this subtle grading, parents' education predestined most of us either to the Latin set or to the domestic science stream. The Latins were headed, it was presumed, to university, the cooks to secretarial college. Since we were usually hungry, the Latins hung around outside the cookery room yearning for the pies and cakes the others carried out in silver tins – and yet we Latins knew perfectly well that we were glad to be designated A streamers. Since I hated Latin and failed it at O-level, I'd have had a better time with the domestic science stream, but of course I'd have been appalled at relegation to the B stream: social status trumps cakes.

I left Badminton with four bad O-levels, no maths, no science, no Latin, so the value for money was poor. Those marks were not, directly, the school's fault: much of the teaching was conventionally good, but I was too rebellious to work, too angry to obey, too impatient to get out of there. Observing the many schools my four children have attended, the few schools that succeed concentrate first on happiness: learning is drudgery without it. And schools are undoubtedly happier places for my grandchildren than they were when my children experienced them, let alone back in the late 1950s when I was sent away.

At 16 I took myself out of that detested school and into the sixth form of Holland Park, the gleaming new first comprehensive in Notting Hill. There for the first time I found pleasure in education. As for the missing O-levels, I took them again my first term at Holland Park where I was steered through retakes with kindly persuasion, under the mentorship of Mr Stedman Jones, the scholarly head of the English department, devotee of Dr Johnson. This fine teacher, against all family expectation, guided me into winning an Oxford open scholarship too, by passing on to me his deep fascination with and knowledge of Jacobean drama, studying far beyond the ordinary curriculum, engrossing me in his literary obsessions.

But now when I think about it again, probably that extra help from a great comprehensive teacher wasn't pure luck. What if I'd been a working-class O-level failure, who would have bothered to see if I was worth a second chance? Mr Stedman Jones may have picked on me for special coaching because he knew of my family's literary and academic background and just assumed I must have an inherited talent hidden away somewhere, though I had nothing much to show for it. I was once told by an academic of an appealing education experiment conducted some years ago that alas I haven't been able to trace: a group of teachers were

HAIR & MAKEUP: SARAH CHERRY. COURTESY OF POLLY TOYNBEE



picked and told they had been specially selected as the most highly skilled to teach some particularly brilliant children, children who were also told that secret tests had revealed they were exceptionally gifted. Both teachers and pupils did extraordinarily well, though all had been chosen at random. Expectation is everything.

The truth is, the Oxford scholarship exam of those days was designed to reward people of exactly my background and journalistic state of mind. Its general paper was one of the most enjoyable and encouraging exams ever devised, with scores of essay questions to choose from on every conceivable subject, open-ended, imaginative and even fantastical in their scope. Choose any question on any subject and show off to us! Intrigue us with a parade of ideas! It searched for what you could do best, while most exams aim to catch you out on what you know least. That should be the guiding spirit in all exams, I thought. But that's because it best suits dilettantes already exposed to wide reading, precisely as encouraged by my background.

**GOOD LIBERAL PARENTS TEACH THEIR CHILDREN TO CHECK THEIR PRIVILEGE, BUT IT SWELLS UP LIKE A BUBO ON THE NOSE. THERE'S NO HIDING IT**

This heavily class-biased exam would disadvantage very clever applicants who had worked exceedingly hard at every subject at school but lacked the family or an Alan Bennett History Boys teacher or my Mr Stedman Jones to open their wings at this early stage in their life. This was the perfect exam to select future newspaper columnists.

HOW NARROWLY I ESCAPED teen motherhood and an end to any educational expectations. I was bowled over in love with a clever and cerebral boy, son of a high Catholic convert mother but humanist father, sent to Ampleforth, though by then he had thoroughly shaken off all that. His breadth of cultural and intellectual interest was beyond anything I had come across among friends of my age. I was awe-struck not just by him, his avid reading, zeal for jazz, poetry and left-wing politics, but also by his cool and detached air of grace. His father was a wise and humorous international human rights lawyer, who reminded me of Mr Bennet in Pride and Prejudice. As

*Portrait: Sophia Spring*


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for his older sister, who became a good painter, I looked up to her with a kind of hero-worship for her wild and funny exuberance.

But as he was about to go to Oxford, I was appalled to find I was pregnant and even more appalled at his anti-abortion mother pressing us to marry. She suggested we would live in an Oxford flat, where I would bring up the baby while he studied: the end of my own future worried her not at all. We paid a visit to his newly married sister, who was living in Oxford's Summertown, up the road from my great-aunts. I was pleased to see her, this lively, funny and magnetic character. But she was living, as far as I could see, the life their mother expected me to live, married and cooped up in an Oxford flat with a baby. Though she was herself a student, wifedom and life with a baby looked to me like a brutal curtailment of studenthood, locked in at home. There was her baby, Alexander, a few months old, lying naked on a bath mat, kicking his feet in the air, round, pink and fat, with a remarkable shock of electrically bright blond hair. As I gazed at him, I didn't find that baby at all appealing, too pink and too noisy. I shuddered at the prospect of this motherly existence, threatening an end to my life before it had even begun.

Afterwards, as we both contemplated this scene, looking at his sister and at the vision of our future stretching out ahead of us, he broke off with me. His mother was plainly glad, but she called me many times to insist that I have the baby and give it away to a Catholic adoption agency. I was aghast that anyone could suggest anything so cruel. This was still before abortion was finally legalised in 1967. But I was lucky, again. My family's GP was a disreputable and amenable practitioner, who we always thought made extra money on the side by dispensing more or less anything anyone wanted, and so he prescribed what were then illegal abortion-inducing pills: after two days of great pain, to my immense relief, that was the end of the pregnancy. But I didn't know if my boyfriend's mother might investigate and report me, and I feared she might. The end of that relationship left me heartbroken and bereft, taking revenge by writing him into my (not very good) first novel. That baby on the bath mat, who so decisively put me off the idea of teen motherhood, grew up to be the most disgraced prime minister under his ludicrously changed name of Boris: he looks much the same.

As for my former lover, he is a serious writer and thinker and a remote friend: odd how impossible it is to recapture old passions. I simply recall the fact of the agony of unrequited love, but look at him now as an interesting but distant person, all passion spent. As for Boris Johnson, I look back with a morbid incredulity at what that baby grew up to be. It's a not particularly good joke to surprise people with the fact that I am one of the many women to have seen him naked.

ULTIMATELY, I threw my education away, abandoning university midway through second year, and I regret it. Why? It's far too long ago to summon up an honest answer. I could say arriving mid disastrous affair with a married roué TV presenter the same age as my mother, a famously seductive character, notorious (I didn't know) for a succession of young girls discarded in turn, until a few years later he killed himself. I could say that having my first novel published in my first term was an act of such presumption that it set me up for a crash landing at Oxford. I could say it was the scholarship's unbearable pressure to get a first, with my two great-aunts, one a professor, one a don, walking their dog down to visit my tutors regularly to enquire after my latest essays. Maybe it was taking up with Jeremy Sandford, screenwriter of Ken Loach's Cathy Come Home, and living part-time on his ramshackle Brecon Beacons farm looking after ragged sheep and ponies. In truth, I can't recapture the blend of woe and impatience that propelled me out. My shocked tutor, Jenifer Hart, said, "You will regret this for the rest of

## I LOOK BACK WITH INCREDULITY ABOUT WHO THAT BABY GREW UP TO BE, AND SURPRISE PEOPLE WITH THE FACT THAT I AM ONE OF THE MANY WOMEN TO HAVE SEEN HIM NAKED

your days. Everyone who leaves here tries to come back and we never, ever take them."

It must have taken the cocky self-assurance of a secure middle-class background that I never doubted I would earn my living. It was 1968, drop-out era, jobs were plentiful and no one worried. It was another universe for my luckiest of generations, compared with my pressured grandchildren who will emerge into a land of ferocious competition for fewer chances. But I did feel a fundamental distaste for Oxford and all its ways, its conceits and arrogances, its denizens' obnoxious certainty of their superior merit. Whatever the reason, I threw it all away recklessly. Because everything is preserved for ever by the recording angels of the internet, those on the right who detest what I write in my Guardian columns sometimes dredge up my lack of a degree as ammunition to prove my stupidity and evidence that I don't know what I'm talking about.

INSOFAR AS THERE WAS A PLAN, this was it: I had to pay back my scholarship money, and I would earn my living by working all day with my hands, leaving my mind free to roam over the next section of the second novel that I would sit down and write in the evenings. I was not intending to write about work or factories, just to earn enough to get by while I wrote my modern Middlemarch. I took a job on the production line of the Tate & Lyle sugar-packing factory, beside a trickling remnant of the River Wandle in south London, where it was easy to walk up and straight into work.

Inside the great vaulted works, issued with overalls, hairnet and cap, the shattering, clattering and clanking battered the ears, while deep vibrations sent clouds of sugar dust up into the air. I'd been working as a waitress in a Wimpy and then in a Golden Egg, but I preferred the drama of a factory, the sheer ingenuity of what these machines could do. Besides, factory work paid more into the weekly brown paper pay packets of notes and coins, because it was well unionised with everyone a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

"Sitting next to Nellie" was the only induction, training or safety instruction in manual jobs back then (so is it still in many jobs, I later found). The sugar came cascading in a torrent down chutes into the waiting blue and white Tate & Lyle paper bags that whirled round the conveyor belt at high speed as metal levers shot out and folded down one paper flap after another, adding a dollop of glue before scooting the bags down the line. There were two basic jobs: one was standing under the chute by the metal levers to pull out bags fast if any misfired, split or failed to seal. The other, less skilled, was heaving in turn first six then eight bags off the line to stack into boxes on a slower conveyor line behind.

I would get home exhausted and aching, but beyond that, deadened in the brain by the noise and the transfixing monotony of the same action repeated 10,000 times over. So how was that second novel coming along? How was all that working with my hands to keep my brain free for higher things? It was a sharp lesson in why factories, construction sites, laundries, cleaning agencies, warehouses and catering kitchens don't seem to produce their fair quota of literary output. I stuck it out for a couple of months, as a matter of pride, to prove to myself I wasn't a middle-class weakling, too soft and spoilt to do an ordinary job. But I lasted no longer. Not a word emerged on paper of an evening on to my old black Remington typewriter.

What finally propelled me out of the factory was a growing bloom of a rash, all up my arms and then legs and face, itching like fury, unhelped by Pond's or Nivea. The other women laughed: they all got it, they said, the sugar rash, but it usually wore off after six months as your body got used to it. I didn't wait to see.

Why would you, if you had a choice? And I was born with choices. At university after my novel was published I was commissioned to write sometimes for the New Statesman, including an ill-advised attack on Oxford that caused a measure of outrage. Asking around for any writing work, by luck I discovered the Observer needed a temp for a week or two to cover for someone away ill on the Pendennis column, a miscellany of short pieces. When Anne Chisholm, the page editor, came back, she said she'd been wanting an assistant so she kept me on, no one apparently noticing an extra job added to the payroll. When I talk to young aspiring journalists now, all with not only a degree but an MA from a good postgraduate journalism course, they are amazed it was so easy to slide into newspapers, but 1968 was a lotus time of plenty.

I never meant to be a journalist. But once I was there, sent out with notebook and Biro, I was gripped by reporting. I gravitated to the news desk where, whenever possible, I pushed to report on work and labour. Industrial stories, strikes, strife and unions were staple news, and I was drawn to reporting on the nature of work and its conditions, eager to puncture the myths of all that "dignity of work" extolled by those not doing it.

Feeling ignorant of the world beyond my upbringing, I took time off to set out around the country, taking jobs in different towns and industries to try to understand work and a working-class world a planet away from my South Kensington background. Often the middle-class writer's eye is instinctively drawn to extremes, to the romance of the gutter, to homeless people on the streets, to the near-starving and desperate cases. Instead, I wanted to report on the ordinary, the everyday work it took to keep a family's head above water. That's where the great class divide yawns, right there, the grand canyon in education, life chances, surroundings, sense of security, expectations, presumptions – there in the nature of work itself ●

*This is an edited extract from An Uneasy Inheritance: My Family and Other Radicals by Polly Toynbee, published by Atlantic Books on 1 June (£20). To order a copy for £17.60 go to guardianbookshop.com. Polly Toynbee will be talking about the book at a Guardian Live event on 31 May – for details, go to membership.theguardian.com/events*


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# CULTURE

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## GAGGING ORDER

*Free speech comedy clubs are giving 'cancelled' standups a platform but how far is too far?*




## Graham Linehan and Dapper Laughs walk into a club … It sounds like the setup to a bad joke, yet platforming 'cancelled' comics is a formula that's packing out venues. But can a night run by a GB News host really claim to be anti-establishment?

*Words: Rachel Aroesti*

IT IS A BLUSTERY evening in early April, and a crowd has gathered in east London's Bethnal Green to watch a comedy show. They seem like a fairly typical audience: white, but not exclusively so; male, but not overwhelmingly. Slightly older than average, perhaps, but I still spot plenty of young couples, and even a teenager or two.

But don't be fooled. This is not your run-of-the-mill comedy night; this is Comedy Unleashed: a rebellion against the "safe, tramline orthodoxy" of the contemporary comedy circuit, according to its website, and a haven for "free-thinking comedians who leave their self-censorship button at the door". Notably, that includes "cancelled" figures who have faced censure for their comic material or social media posts, among them standup Andrew Lawrence and Father Ted writer Graham Linehan – both on the bill tonight – as well as Daniel O'Reilly (otherwise known as Dapper Laughs), Mary Bourke and Leo Kearse. Comedy Unleashed is also clear about what it won't tolerate: "nodding along to sermons with wisecracks is out".

Say what you like about Comedy Unleashed (and as free speech advocates, I'm sure they would encourage that), but the demand is clearly there. Five years in, its 300-seater London gigs regularly sell out, it has a monthly event in Leeds – which according to co-founder Andy Shaw is booked in for the next two years – and last year embarked on a UK-wide tour, featuring Reginald D Hunter, Geoff Norcott and Tony Law. The "free-thinking" comedy club is cropping up across the pond, too: in March, podcast megastar Joe Rogan – himself no stranger to a backlash thanks to his use of the N-word and antisemitic tropes – opened his Comedy Mothership venue in Austin, Texas, with Roseanne Barr (who was removed from her own sitcom after tweeting racist insults) and Tony Hinchcliffe (who was dropped by his agent for using racial slurs on stage) on the opening lineup.

These clubs position themselves as a necessary corrective to an over-censorious comedy industry. Although the "say-what-I-like" megastars remain Teflon-coated – the likes of Ricky Gervais, Jimmy Carr and Dave Chappelle get Netflix specials and play major venues – it is also true that the strata of standups below them have had gigs cancelled for making offensive jokes. Shaw makes a point of courting comics who have been lambasted online for expressing particular views. "If somebody's cancelled we'll put them on, on principle and let the audience decide if they're funny or not," he says. On the morning we speak, Shaw tweets an open invitation to TikTok star NoHun, who made the news that week for repeatedly commenting "men can't get pregnant" under the Instagram posts of a trans man.

Welcoming cancelled comedians may be Comedy Unleashed's calling card, but is it a USP? There are other venues that are willing to host complained-about standups. While Linehan – whose Father Ted musical was axed as a result of his Twitter campaign against trans-rights activists – has only ever gigged at Comedy Unleashed, Bourke frequently appears at other clubs and O'Reilly will next year embark on a 22-date UK tour. This autumn, Andrew Lawrence will play the Leicester Square theatre, one of London's best-known comedy venues.

Martin Witts, the Leicester Square theatre's artistic director, believes every comedy club "should be a free speech comedy club", and that standup is an art that is almost impossible to police. "You can't dictate what people say on stage; indeed there's no way you can prepare for some things that are said on stage, either." He doesn't personally endorse all the acts he hosts – Lawrence, who had gigs cancelled for racist tweets about black footballers missing penalties in the Euro 2020 final, has some material he finds "a bit reprehensible" – but Witts sees that as irrelevant.

On one occasion, Witts asked a white comic to stop using the N-word – "I had a quiet word and said it's upsetting people. He actually hadn't thought about that" – but his only solid red line is the existence of a criminal conviction associated with the comedy itself. "An example of that is [French comic] Dieudonné. We booked him, the Jewish Chronicle got involved and it was decided that it wasn't right to book him, because there are certain things which aren't acceptable." (In 2009, the Leicester Square theatre cancelled a performance by Dieudonné after he was fined by French authorities for making antisemitic remarks; he has since spent time in jail for the same offence.)

Would Comedy Unleashed stop short of hosting

somebody with a similar conviction? "Our red line is: is it funny?" says Shaw. What about hate speech? "There's a really funny joke about hate speech: what is hate speech? It's anything we hate." It is also the law, though. Shaw sighs. "If people are constantly worried about the possibility of offending a single person in an audience, they will never follow their art or be funny."

In some areas, this free rein seems only theoretical: I witnessed no racist remarks or Holocaust denial at the Comedy Unleashed show I saw, and have seen no reports of them. Yet there was a constant stream of jokes about transgender people, a theme seemingly also common to Rogan's Comedy Mothership. In its review of the opening night, the Hollywood Reporter noted that "within seconds of the first comic taking the stage, a gay slur was thrown out, followed by jokes about trans people. The audience hooted." According to Shaw, in Comedy Unleashed's case, this is a result of the desire to ensure its comedians aren't "frightened of dealing with difficult topics; people are talking about all sorts of subjects that are not being dealt with in comedy. Sex and gender is a good example: that's a really difficult subject and to deal with it comedically is really important from a cultural perspective."

It is not true that such topics are verboten in the comedy world: for a start, there are trans comedians who routinely make jokes about sex and gender. However, the ambition in some quarters to avoid offence is not entirely an anti-woke fantasy, either. Ophelia Francis is the booker for 2Northdown and 21Soho, small London venues that often host work-in-progress shows and up-and-coming comedians. While she has no written policy or officially banned language, if she "can see the potential of anyone saying anything on our stage in front of our logo that could hurt or offend just one single person, then it's not worth it for us at all. Those who perform on our stages, I trust wouldn't be using language to offend."

Recently, Francis was offered a gig by "a very big name, which would have sold out and made us money, but the profit is not worth it if people who we work with are hurting from words they've said".

It is an approach that Shaw argues is representative of the whole of the mainstream comedy industry. "All the people who have influence in the industry – the TV commissioners and the comedy critics and the people who run it – are not taking risks. They're worried about an adverse reaction and instantly respond to it, rather than being a bit more grownup and saying: if you don't like it you don't like it, that's up to you; go and watch something else."

The reality is more complicated. As an outsider, it is impossible to judge the industry by what never reaches our screens, but it is possible to argue that the world of TV comedy still considers offence to be an occupational hazard. After his joke about Roma people and the Holocaust caused mass outrage online in 2022, Jimmy Carr was backed by Channel 4 which announced another series of his gameshow, chief content officer Ian Katz commenting: "I defend the rights of comedians to make offensive jokes and if they can't, then comedy is dead."

Nor do the other networks always err on the side of caution. Despite making headlines for censoring its back catalogue, in 2020 – mere weeks before the show was removed from the iPlayer due to its use of blackface – Little Britain's creators reprised their controversial transvestite characters for pandemic telethon The Big Night In. The same year, the BBC doubled down on a Famalam sketch that Jamaica's foreign minister judged to be "outrageous and offensive" to Jamaicans. Months earlier, comedian Nabil Abdulrashid's performances on ITV's Britain's Got Talent, during which he joked about race relations, received more than 3,000 complaints; all of them were rejected by Ofcom.

In the live arena, things can be less clear-cut. Take the case of Jerry Sadowitz, the veteran comic known for his shocking material and extremely misanthropic persona, whose show at the Pleasance at last year's Edinburgh fringe was cancelled hours beforehand, reportedly because he had used the P-word and flashed his penis the previous evening. "The Pleasance is a venue that champions freedom of speech and we do not censor comedians' material," read the venue's statement on the matter. However: "Opinions such as those displayed on stage by Sadowitz are not acceptable and the Pleasance is not prepared to be associated with such material." (The Pleasance declined to speak for this article.)

STUART MITCHELL/INCMONOCLE; MURDO MACLEOD/
THE GUARDIAN; THAMES/SYCO/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Laughing matters**
(Left) Comedy Unleashed's co-founder Andrew Doyle; (below) Jordan Gray and Nabil Abdulrashid, whose brushes with Ofcom have done them no harm





Witts, who used to manage Sadowitz ("If you can manage Sadowitz; he's a bit like a wild horse"), subsequently booked him a much bigger show at west London's Hammersmith Apollo, while celebrities and comedians protested at his treatment. Other comics have avoided career damage for doing similar things on paper. Daniel Kitson used the P-word in his 2017 show Something Other Than Everything and had no gigs cancelled. After comic Jordan Gray, a trans woman, exposed her penis on Channel 4 show Friday Night Live last year, Ofcom dismissed the 1,538 complaints it received and Gray's career has since gone from strength to strength.

**'If people worry about possibly offending one person in the audience, they'll never be funny'**

At the same time, the permissiveness that Shaw maintains is Comedy Unleashed's driving force doesn't feel entirely consistent with the tenor of the evening. A topic that crops up in various sets at the event I attend is Channel 4's Naked Education, a programme in which teenagers are confronted with naked adults. Swedish comedian Tobias Persson says he feels like "part of an underground resistance movement" for denouncing the show as perverted, an observation greeted with clapping and murmurs of "Yes!" in the crowd. The suggestion that such television should not be broadcast doesn't seem to fit with a free-thinking ethos. Does Shaw see the irony? "I don't remember that, to be honest," he says.

Rather than the concept of free speech – something that even the apparently risk-averse Pleasance says is a guiding principle – it's the idea of the audience identifying as an underground resistance movement that feels like the best distillation of Comedy Unleashed's distinctive appeal. In this case, the establishment – the mainstream – is a magic eye picture that changes depending on the angle. Some might say Comedy Unleashed is about as mainstream as it gets: many regulars appear routinely on GB News – where co-founder Andrew Doyle hosts his own show – a channel that has featured multiple Tory MPs interviewing each other; while the Daily Mail, Britain's biggest newspaper, has run numerous articles on Naked Education, calling it "sinister and dangerous".

Within the world of comedy, which does tend towards the politically progressive (in 2020, Geoff Norcott joked he was one of about "six" rightwing comics in the UK), it makes slightly more sense for Shaw to refer to his night as "very countercultural". Although it jars to hear him compare its ethos to the early 80s advent of alternative comedy, which made stars of Ben Elton, Rik Mayall, Alexei Sayle and French and Saunders. (The Comedy Unleashed podcast's logo is a picture of Rick from The Young Ones.) Alternative comedy in this country began by standing in opposition to the sexist and racist material of the working men's club comics who were ubiquitous at the time, the very attitude Comedy Unleashed claims is ruining comedy today. At the same time, it's difficult to transpose those attitudes wholesale to today: Jennifer Saunders and Dawn French are among those who have complained about cancel culture's deleterious effect on comedy.

Unlike the obscenity laws that saw Lenny Bruce arrested in 1960s America, causing offence is not a crime (although that is not always clear, even to the authorities: in 2021, Merseyside police was forced to retract its own advertising slogan: "being offensive is an offence"). Clearly, using it to regulate comedy is a staggeringly imprecise enterprise; there are no universal anti-offence guidelines. Nor should there be. In fact, all talk of absolutes in the comedic realm feels strange, whether it be moral – unacceptable opinions, the refusal to host comedy with the potential to cause offence, the idea of total free speech – or comedic. Shaw's motto is: "if it's funny, it's funny", but funny is not a fact. Comedy is necessarily subjective, and at its best can puncture ideological purity. Despite being generally appalled by his social media activity, during his standup set I found myself laughing at Linehan's whimsical material about pizza wackaging, putting me in a moral grey area that could only really exist in the realm of live comedy.

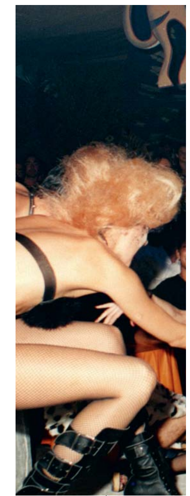
Comedy Unleashed also turns out to be rather vague in practice: a theoretically unbounded space that doesn't end up testing the limits of general propriety. When attempting to sum up the kind of comedians he is looking for, Shaw returns to the same phrase three times: he is looking for acts "who have got something about them". What that something actually amounts to, it seems, will always be a matter of perspective.

# Pacha project

## Ibiza's oldest club grew out of the island's hippy culture to become a rite of passage for superstar DJs, celebs and dance fans. Can it still cast a spell as it turns 50?

*Words: Siân Boyle*

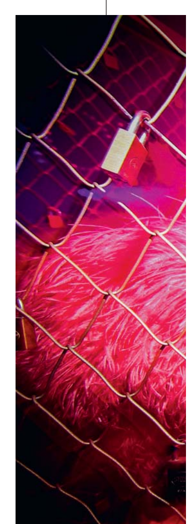












SEBASTIAN DESBATS; VICTOR MORENO "VITORINO"; ANA RUIZ DE VILLOTA; PACHA IBIZA

The year was 2010, the last vestige of time in which, when the beat dropped in the club, there would be thousands of hands in the air simultaneously cutting through the laser lights instead of holding up little glowing bars to film it.

Swedish House Mafia, the superstar DJ trio comprising Steve Angello, Axwell and Sebastian Ingrosso, had taken over the world with their euphoric Eurodance bangers, and those who'd managed to get into their residency night at Pacha, the superclub in Ibiza's Mediterranean Old Town, knew that they were at the centre of the island's best party.

But they weren't prepared for what happened next. Pacha's twin cherry logos glowed red and, suddenly, on a platform before the crowd appeared none other than Kylie Minogue, delivering an impromptu reworking of Can't Get You Out of My Head, the irresistible beats of which now came courtesy of Swedish House Mafia.

"It was an explosion. Nobody knew it was going to happen," says Francisco Ferrer, a local man who started working for Pacha in 1985 selling tickets and would become its global brand ambassador. "You could feel the happiness of people around the room," he says. "It's a big memory." He had devised the performance with Kylie, who enjoyed the club so much she would often go incognito with her friends to dance in the middle of the crowd.

Ferrer and I are speaking inside an eerily empty Pacha while technicians tinker away in the DJ booth. In just a few hours' time, the doors will open to thousands of clubbers for the nightclub's opening party, heralding the unofficial start of the season. Opening party weekend here is always a big one, but as it's Pacha's 50th anniversary, tonight will be particularly exceptional. The anniversary marks not just five decades of the island's oldest club, but of Ibiza partying itself.

When Ferrer was born in 1964, just a few hundred yards away from Pacha, Ibiza was a remote island unknown to many in the rest of Europe. But the seeds of its identity as a hedonistic, free and inclusive paradise had already begun to germinate. Word spread of a mythical white island with irrepressible natural beauty that had become Spain's unofficial refuge from General Franco's fascist government.

Ibiza soon drew the first hippies and beatniks from the US who were fleeing conscription from the Vietnam war, instead forming free-love communes and throwing raves in the rugged centre and north of the island. In Eivissa Town, across the marina from Pacha, the Calle de la Virgen street was a hallowed LGBTQ+ sanctuary.

A young entrepreneur named Ricardo Urgell, having already founded the first Pacha nightclub in Sitges, Catalonia, visited Ibiza in the early 70s and was determined to create the first official discotheque there. Ignoring financial advisers who complained that a bunch of hippies was too small a group of people to cater for, Urgell converted an old whitewashed farmhouse into a party palace and, in 1973, Pacha Ibiza was born.

Flower Power, the club's earliest themed night, is still going to this day – playing 60s and 70s music. Resplendent with daisies and peace signs, the farmhouse once famously played Imagine while an elevated bed made its way through the crowd, upon which languished a pair of joint-smoking John Lennon and Yoko Ono impersonators.

At another Flower Power night, Ferrer remembers finding Mick Jagger – the real one – in an empty room. Old Snake Hips was alone, swaying, in the centre of the dancefloor, absorbed in the music. "Do you want something to drink?" Ferrer asked him, tentatively. "No," Jagger replied. "I'm here to listen to this music. I'm alone here; nobody can disturb me and I can dance and be myself."

By the 1980s and 90s, Ibiza was the island of personalities, and Pacha, as the sassiest, glitziest club, was "the place to be and be seen". Any celebrity worth their salt partied there. Grace Jones was always cutting shapes





**Night fever**
Highlights from Pacha's half-century, including guest turns by Kylie (left) and David Guetta and Will.I.Am (centre)










while a slew of designers – Armani, Dolce and Gabbana, Jean Paul Gaultier – and their entourages packed out the VIP booths.

The concept of a "superstar DJ" did not yet exist, which meant the crowd and the club itself were the spectacle. Palm trees. Chandeliers of fireworks. Confetti explosions. Smoke cannon. Strobe lights. Fire-breathers. And as well as the ravers, there were the go-go dancers: beautiful women and men complementing the aural fiesta.

"It was freeness," recalls Ferrer. "You met a lot of people because maybe you are dancing and meet people next to you, then begin to speak to them, you know? There was no telephone, there was no Instagram. It was natural. Now society is very performing."

By the late 1980s, house music was permeating from the turntables of Frankie Knuckles and Marshall Jefferson in Chicago warehouse raves. These infectious 120bpm sounds soon landed on the shores of the White Isle, where the hedonism of Pacha, Amnesia and Ku Club (the biggest club in the world, later renamed Privilege) had reached its zenith – enough to influence four British blokes to import elements of the scene to the UK.

Paul Oakenfold, Johnny Walker, Nicky Holloway and Danny Rampling were blown away in 1987 by the Balearic beats, raves that lasted for days, and their first ecstasy experiences. As soon as they landed back in London they launched their own club nights, Spectrum, Shoom and The Trip, and what happened next is well-worn UK house history: illegal raves, ecstasy, the Smiley face, tabloid hysteria and the 1988 "second summer of love".

The next chapter is considered by many Britons (but perhaps by fewer Spaniards) as the "golden era" of Ibiza – all despite the insalubrious 18-30s package holidays, turbo-shandies on San Antonio's strip and "Brits abroad" behaviour as captured by the Ibiza Uncovered TV series.

The songs of the 1990s are timeless: Café Del Mar by Energy 52; Music Sounds Better With You by Stardust; 9PM (Till I Come) by ATB; Children by Robert Miles; Needin' U, from Pacha's resident DJ, David Morales. By then, the aftershocks of the 'Beefa boom were reverberating around the world.

The 00s, however, were when Pacha hit its commercial peak. It was one of the first major clubs to book David Guetta, who was paid for his first sets with the money Ferrer and his crew made from selling branded T-shirts that day. In the first year of the new millennium, Paul Oakenfold was a resident DJ, playing mammoth sets lasting until 9am. And the British invasion was cemented with Darren Emerson's Underwater nights and sets from Paul Woolford and X Press 2.

For Simon Dunmore, the founder and former CEO of Defected Records, the label that hosted a summer-long season at Pacha for eight years between 2005 to 2012, the 00s was "the rise of the superclubs".

"It was the early days of the internet, and reputations grew over that period of time because people were way more connected," he says.

The subsequent decade saw previously underground electronic music enter the mainstream, and cemented Ibiza's reputation as a rite of passage for any dance music fan. Yet the commercialisation of dance saw aspects of the island fall victim to rampant capitalism, notably through eye-watering drinks prices, a ballooning VIP culture and overcrowding on the dancefloors.

The balance between Ibiza's outlaw heritage and modern gloss is an ongoing issue. There are distinctly more private jets and yachts than in yesteryear, but Sanjay Nandi, the CEO of Pacha Group, believes people of all demographics are still attracted to the island. "It's not possible to fill superclubs entirely with high-net-worth individuals," he says.

Yet while Pacha diversifies, Jessica Capaz McCarthy, Pacha Group's artistic director, argues the club's ethos will remain the same. "I feel like when you go to a nightclub it's all about the feeling of connection, and everything we do is about connection," she says. "That's what makes people feel like they had the best night of their lives."





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**Bare here now**
The 1997 Full Monty, with (below) Wim Snape, Mark Addy, Robert Carlyle, Steve Huison and Tom Wilkinson





**'When all else fails, you need community and DIY to save yourself and those around you'**

# 'Taking their clothes off was a metaphor'

The Full Monty is back, but this time no one gets naked, gay characters are part of the furniture, and the women are more than just wives. Writers *Simon Beaufoy* and *Alice Nutter* talk about the new TV show's place in an asset-stripped state

AP; PROD.DB/ALAMY; 20TH CENTURY FOX/ALLSTAR; 20TH CENTURY FOX/CHANNEL FOUR FILMS

**Simon Beaufoy** Back in the mid-90s, I was unexpectedly kicking my heels in Sheffield. My girlfriend was in hospital and there wasn't much to do in between visiting hours other than wander. It was a city literally being demolished in front of my eyes; there was a sort of grim theatricality to watching the wrecking ball take down another steel mill. Fifteen years of the Conservatives' determination to allow heavy industry to collapse had left the north of England devastated. Men who had done the same job as their father and grandfather were now in a sort of shock, at a loss as to what to do with their lives, unsure of their place in the world.

The whole idea of male strippers wasn't terribly interesting to me initially – the Chippendales were old news by then – until our astute producer, Uberto Pasolini, asked: "What's happened to the British man that he'd take his clothes off for money? In Italy this would never happen!" Suddenly, everything clicked. I thought: what if we put it in the context of what was happening in Sheffield? What if we made taking your clothes off a metaphor for desperation, a loss of identity that working-class men from the steelworks had had stripped away from them by a government that appeared indifferent to the effects of their policies? Suddenly, we had comedy, politics and pathos all coalescing.

After the success of the film there was a lot of chatter about a followup, but I could never find a story that would better the original, my only criteria to write a sequel. For 20 years, nothing. Then, in the last few years, it became increasingly clear that we were in the same place again. This time, it was less visible than a wrecking ball, more insidious. The political destruction wreaked by successive governments wasn't about destroying industry; it was the infrastructure of the country they'd come to asset-strip, slowly and incredibly successfully. Schools, hospitals, dental care, social care, mental health care, transport, the courts, water: all of the structures that allow people in need to function were now on the edge of collapse. So, the idea took shape of going back to Sheffield.

I thought a Full Monty TV series would be a great vehicle to not only see what's still going wrong with the country, but also how things are




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changing in a good way. The shift in gender and sexuality expectations has completely changed since the original film. In the movie we had to cut away just before the two gay characters kiss and now we have these two gay characters married so long they're sick of each other. How great is that? We're not interested in their sexuality, so much as the fact that one of them has secretly spent 50 grand out of the joint account on a racing pigeon!

So I approached Alice, who I've been working with for many years and asked: "Do we really want to do this? Is this the right time?" We had as many misgivings as everyone else about revisiting these characters again.

**Alice Nutter** The misgivings were based on whether we really could make it relevant to this moment. I'd been a fan of the film, and in a lot of ways it was close to what we were espousing in [the band I was in] Chumbawamba: when all else fails, you need community and DIY to save yourself and the people around you. With the welfare safety net being scrapped, the original ethos of the film was utterly salient to now and we knew we could carry that through. And we also knew that we could do this without repeating ourselves and having the Monty men taking their clothes off.

**Beaufoy** We make a good team. We both come to stories from character. If I make a joke too many she'll ask if we shouldn't favour the truth over a gag and I sometimes have to call her out on her political rants if they are too … ranty. We balance each other out.

**Nutter** That's called teaching me craft!

**Beaufoy** There was something interesting about seeing these guys, at another moment of big change, 25 years on. Now, our characters are scratching their heads trying to keep up with the pace of change in terms of how we speak about the world. There's a legion of men who are trying to work out why certain words that were acceptable on Monday are no longer acceptable on Friday. Putting a spotlight on men - and I include myself in this - who are running to keep up with the lightning-fast linguistic evolution, that's a ripe area to look at right now. And funny.

**Nutter** And it's a symptom of a much deeper problem. My dad was a white, working-class Tory; he had jobs like petrol pump attendant. But no matter how low he was down the totem pole, he was always a white man, and that gave him more power than some other groups. What's happened with this Brexit generation, is that people like my dad feel like the one area of power that they had, has been taken away. They are bewildered because that's really the only thing that was ever promised to them.

**Beaufoy** Bewilderment is a great word to use: our characters are bewildered. They're not bad people; there isn't a single bad character in the series. But they're lost and flailing a bit. I think masculinity used to mean strength, and femininity used to mean weakness. They're all scrambling around going: "Whoa, these things don't mean this any more, where does that leave us?" The old prejudices provided a place of comfort for lots of men. Times are different.

It's unusual in that it doesn't have any antagonists. In eight episodes of The Full Monty, the only villain is a state that has withdrawn its support and is watching people struggle. It's full of characters who are like the vast majority of us: basically good, decent people trying to do their best and occasionally fucking up along the way, as we all do.








**Stripping yarns**
Scenes from the new series, with (from top) Robert Carlyle and Talitha Wing as Gaz and his daughter Destiny; Mark Addy as Dave; and Steve Huison as Lomper

BEN BLACKALL

## 'There's something interesting about seeing these guys 25 years on, scratching their heads trying to keep up'

**Nutter** As well as telling working-class stories, it was important to us that the women in The Full Monty weren't just wives. One of our lead characters, Destiny, is a force of nature. She's powerful in a way that was impossible when I was growing up; my generation could be John Lennon's girlfriend but not John Lennon. Destiny wouldn't consider the role of sidekick an option. Despite the original film having a mostly male cast, unless you're making a film about the trenches of the first world war there is no justification for that now.

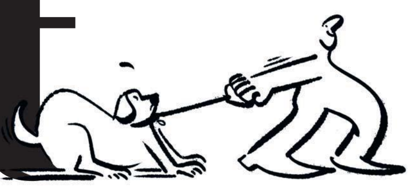
**Beaufoy** In the years between the film and TV series, the big thing that has changed for the worse is privatisation. They privatised public services and then quietly withdrew from the areas that aren't profitable. They left the most vulnerable exposed and alone. As one of the characters says: "At least back then, there was a queue when you went to sign on; people to talk to." Back then there actually was a Job Club. People could get together in their unhappiness. There's not even that any more. Now you're clicking your computer alone in your bedroom. There's an atomisation of society.

**Nutter** The benefit system is more punitive now. I've been on the dole and used it to do creative things, and it wasn't a punishment the way it is now. If you're unemployed now it's your own fault. You're the undeserving poor. That makes it OK for them to take people's Pip [a disability benefit]away, leaving people to starve. And the myth is that these changes are somehow making the system work better, which is one of the things we deal with in the series. There's a Soviet-style truth gap where all the shelves are empty but nobody will admit that the five-year plans aren't just not working, they don't even exist.

**Beaufoy** But it was important to tell these stories in ways that somehow offered hope. The state doesn't care in the Full Monty world but the people do. And no matter how bad things are, people are resilient and kind. Humour gets you through. Hope prevails. And I really believe that. In life as in fiction.

*The Full Monty airs on Disney+ in June.*

# Out





# Going out & Staying in

A cultural primer for the week ahead, whether you're hitting the town or having a lie down ...

## Cinema

**Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret**
**Out now**
Offering nostalgia for people who grew up reading the Judy Blume book, this kind of character-driven drama that's nevertheless suitable for younger viewers (with not a caped crusader in sight) is a relatively rarity on the big screen these days, so catch it while you can.

**Beau Is Afraid**
**Out now**
Director Ari Aster has been firing on all cylinders for a while, debuting with hit horror Hereditary and capitalising on its success with the weird but brilliant Midsommar. Now, with Beau Is Afraid, starring Joaquin Phoenix, he returns with his most challenging offering yet, in which a family member's death prompts a testing, surreal odyssey.

**Fast X**
**Out now**
You know the deal: the most enduring franchise ever to be built around the premise that it's fun to see 1) vehicles moving really fast; and 2) muscular types clinking bottles of Corona together in the name of family. If you're a fan (and why wouldn't you be?) you'll see it, and if you're not, don't bother.

**Local Hero (40th Anniversary)**
**Out now**
This comic Scottish ode to the quieter pleasures in life is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a rerelease, so if you've yet to experience the tale of a hot-shot executive sent to acquire a remote village in order to make way for an oil refinery, now's your chance. Starring Peter Riegert, Peter Capaldi and Burt Lancaster. *Catherine Bray*

## Gigs

**Sidmouth international jazz and blues festival**
**Various venues, Sidmouth, Thursday to 28 May**
Curtis Stigers, the kind of jazzily ingenious performer who gives the sometimes cheesy art of crooning a good name, is Friday's big name here. Jazz-funk stars the Brand New Heavies, and sax firebrand Courtney Pine, also appear over the ensuing weekend. *John Fordham*

**Blondshell**
**Tue to 27 May; tour starts London**
Sabrina Teitelbaum's self-titled debut album as Blondshell – the LA musician used to make music as Baum – bristles with pure rage. It boils over on the revenge fantasy Salad, but is otherwise simmering away on the surface. Expect it to be fully unleashed on this UK tour. *Michael Cragg*

**London Symphony Orchestra/ François-Xavier Roth**
**Barbican Hall, London, Thursday; Dome Concert Hall, Brighton, Friday**
Yuja Wang gives the first UK performances of the concerto written for her by Magnus Lindberg, and which she introduced in Los Angeles last October. *Andrew Clements*

**Project 6 festival**
**Brockwell Park, London, Friday**
Promising the best in drum'n'bass, techno, hip-hop and grime, this new one-dayer also shines a light on the clubs that keep London's nightlife going. Across a bulging lineup, highlights include rappers Ghetts, Flohio and D Double E, plus Goldie and US polymath, Channel Tres (below). *MC*





## Art

**Alchemy**
**Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery, London, Friday to 29 July**
The medieval pseudo-science of alchemy has had a surprising appeal for modern artists. Andy Warhol and Josef Beuys are among the 20th-century giants questing for the philosopher's stone here. It includes Warhol's Piss Paintings, which use urine to create beautifully oxidised copper, plus pieces by Sigmar Polke (work pictured, above) who experimented with arsenic, smoke and uranium rays.

**Painted Love**
**Holburne Museum, Bath, Friday to 1 October**
It's spring time, and that meant love in the Renaissance. This exhibition looks at the marriage portrait, a genre of art in which flowers, fancy hairstyles and gorgeous frocks predominate. Including loans from major collections it promises an intimate encounter with life in the 1400s.

**Sarah Sze**
**Peckham Rye station, London, to 16 September**
Artangel, the London institution that parachutes contemporary art into unlikely places, finds a perfect candidate for its site-specific approach in New York artist Sze. Her spectacular installations of scattered stuff have something in common with the assemblages of the Russian constructivists – and a scattergun hint of Jackson Pollock's action paintings.

**Julian Stair**
**Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich, to 17 September**
The 17th-century Norwich doctor Thomas Browne wrote Urn Burial about human funerary customs and how we remember the dead. This exhibition in the same city shows how, during the pandemic, sculptor Stair asked similar questions. His tall, body-like pots preserve the human, some with donors' ash in their clay. *Jonathan Jones*

AP; CHARLES DUPRAT/ESTATE OF SIGMAR POLKE, COLOGNE/ ADAGP PARIS, 2023

# In



## Stage

**Wells comedy festival**
**Various venues, Friday to 28 May**
For a city the size of a big village, Wells punches well above its weight in comedy festival terms. Phil Wang, Tim Key, Rosie Jones and Mark Watson will all perform polished hours, plus get a sneak peek at work-in-progress shows from Lou Sanders and John Robins. *Rachel Aroesti*

**Brown Girls Do It Too: Mama Told Me Not to Come**
**Soho theatre, Tue to 10 June**
Poppy Jay and Rubina Pabani's podcast has a deliciously silly approach to getting down and dirty. Now they're bringing it to the stage with an intimate sketch show of skits, songs and overshares. Expect big laughs and lots of graphic content. *Kate Wyver*

**Anna Karenina**
**Royal Lyceum theatre, Edinburgh, to 3 June**
Tolstoy's classic is boldly reimagined in this new adaptation by writer Lesley Hart and director Polina Kalinina, featuring a large and lively ensemble, up-to-date dialogue and a dedication to decadence. *KW*

**Eliot Smith Dance: Human**
**Newbiggin Maritime Centre, Fri, touring to 23 June**
A solo show made for the impressive dancer Yamit Salazar, promising a mix of influences from contemporary to commercial to folk, plus a Messiaen- and dance music-inspired score from Adam Johnson. *Lyndsey Winship*




## Streaming

**Fubar**
**Thursday, Netflix**
Is there any film genre that doesn't feel infinitely more appealing as an eight-part series? Arnold Schwarzenegger's trademark strain of action-comedy gets a small-screen transfer (above) with this series about a father and daughter who are shocked to discover they are both CIA operatives.

**Platonic**
**Wednesday, AppleTV+**
Apatow-powered buddy-comedy tale of two reunited pals determined to prove male-female friendships don't always turn romantic. Helmed by Forgetting Sarah Marshall director Nicholas Stoller and starring two Judd Apatow favourites in Rose Byrne (Bridesmaids) and Seth Rogen (Superbad), prepare for a gently modernised nostalgia trip.

**The Clearing**
**Wednesday, Disney+**
In the mid-60s, Australian yoga teacher Anne Hamilton-Byrne started a new-age group called The Family which saw her adopt numerous children, give them her surname and dye their hair blond to match hers. This new drama starring Guy Pearce and Miranda Otto fashions the incredibly creepy facts into an even more ominous fiction.

**Afterglow**
**Saturday, 9pm, BBC Four & iPlayer**
A different kind of Nordic noir courtesy of this tear-jerking black comedy from Norway. Ester Sand is a mother, blissfully married wife and the life and soul of the party who vows to keep her own and everyone else's spirits up when she is diagnosed with cervical cancer soon after her 40th birthday. *RA*



## Games

**Lego 2K Drive**
**Out now, PC, PS4/5, Xbox, Nintendo Switch**
A family-friendly take on the gearhead Forza racing games (above), with plenty of personality and, naturally, Lego customisation.

**After Us**
**Out Tue, PC, Xbox Series X/S, PS5**
An unsubtle but abstractly beautiful environmentalist platformer about reversing the fate of extinct animals after humans have finally destroyed the planet. *Keza MacDonald*



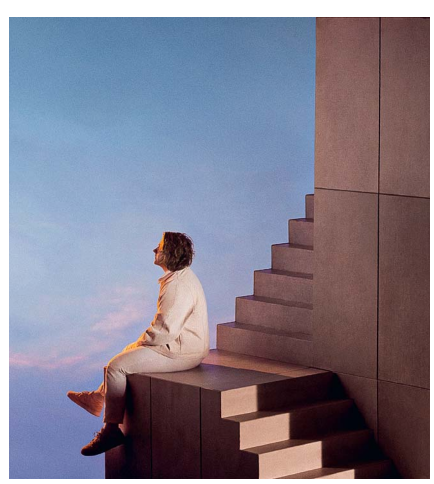
## Albums

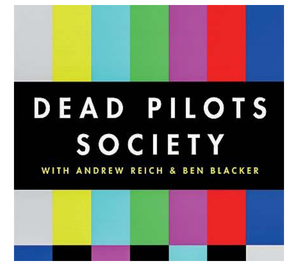
**Sufjan Stevens – Reflections**
**Out now**
The seven-track, wholly instrumental Reflections, performed by pianists Timo Andres and Conor Hanick, features studio versions of Stevens' score for the Justin Peck ballet of the same name. Commissioned by the Houston ballet, and premiered in 2019, it marks the sixth collaboration between Stevens (above) and Peck.

**Kesha – Gag Order**
**Out now**
Having returned to her party pop persona on 2020's people-pleasing High Road, Kesha gets serious on this deeply introspective fifth album. Produced by Rick Rubin, tracks such as Eat the Acid explore weirder, more psychedelic textures, while the whirling, plain-speaking single Fine Line unpicks her recent personal struggles.

**Summer Walker – Clear 2: Soft Life**
**Out now**
First teased last December after the Atlanta R&B singer-songwriter's US No 1 album Still Over It was snubbed by various award shows, this more stripped-back EP finds Walker "making the soul music that I love." It acts as the sequel to 2019's Clear, which featured four live recordings.

**Lewis Capaldi – Broken By Desire to Be Heavenly Sent**
**Out now**
The clown prince of emotionally swollen pop balladry (below) returns with his second album. Already boasting three UK No 1 singles – Forget Me, Pointless and Wish You the Best – expect it to fight with Ed Sheeran's recent opus for chart supremacy over the next 12 months or so. *MC*






## Brain food

**Dead Pilots Society**
**Podcast**
With the writers' strike dominating news in the US, this series unearthing abandoned TV pilots is a welcome reminder of the skills required to bring a show to our screens. Featuring a live audience and dramatised table readings.

**Evolve With Elvis**
**YouTube**
IT education has never been more engaging or endearing, thanks to YouTube and TikTok child sensations Elvis and Megan. The siblings take us through useful keyboard shortcuts, snappily edited together into a series of homemade, minute-long videos.

**Juan Carlos: Downfall of the King**
**Sunday, 9pm, Sky Documentaries**
King Juan Carlos I was celebrated as a modern, democratic reformer of Spain, yet since 2020 he has lived in a self-imposed exile. This four-part investigative series examines how widespread corruption allegations led to his undoing. *Ammar Kalia*

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CHRISTOS KALOHORIDIS/NETFLIX; 2K GAMES; DAWN MILLER



# Circles of influence

## The Brazilian abstract painter Beatriz Milhazes mixes a devotion to nature with staggeringly complex explosions of colour and shape

*Words: Skye Sherwin*

Navigating Beatriz Milhazes' febrile reinvention of geometric abstraction can feel like trying to make headway through a carnival crowd. Hoops, mandalas, flowers and other circular motifs spin like dancers across her canvases, their bright colours slamming into each other. With its erupting forms, which have evolved from tumbly, lacy arabesques to hard-edged grids, sprouting leaves and flowing waves, the Rio de Janeiro-based artist's work has the excess of a street party, a baroque church, a jungle.

"I've tried to bring new possibilities to the course of abstraction," she says while getting ready for her first UK institutional show in more than two decades: a survey, at Margate's Turner Contemporary, of 20 key paintings spanning her 30-plus year career as one of the world's leading abstract painters. "My challenge is how to work with geometry and life. I'm in favour of life, we need it!"

Milhazes recalls how, when she studied art in Rio in the 1980s, painting had been a lesser force in Brazil's cultural scene. Instead it was dominated by the Tropicália installations of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticia that melted boundaries between art and life. So Milhazes looked to Europe. Her first and enduring touchstones included Piet Mondrian and his interest in nature and structure as well as Henri Matisse, a forebear in collaged shapes, vivid colours and the pursuit of beauty, with whom she felt "the deepest connection".

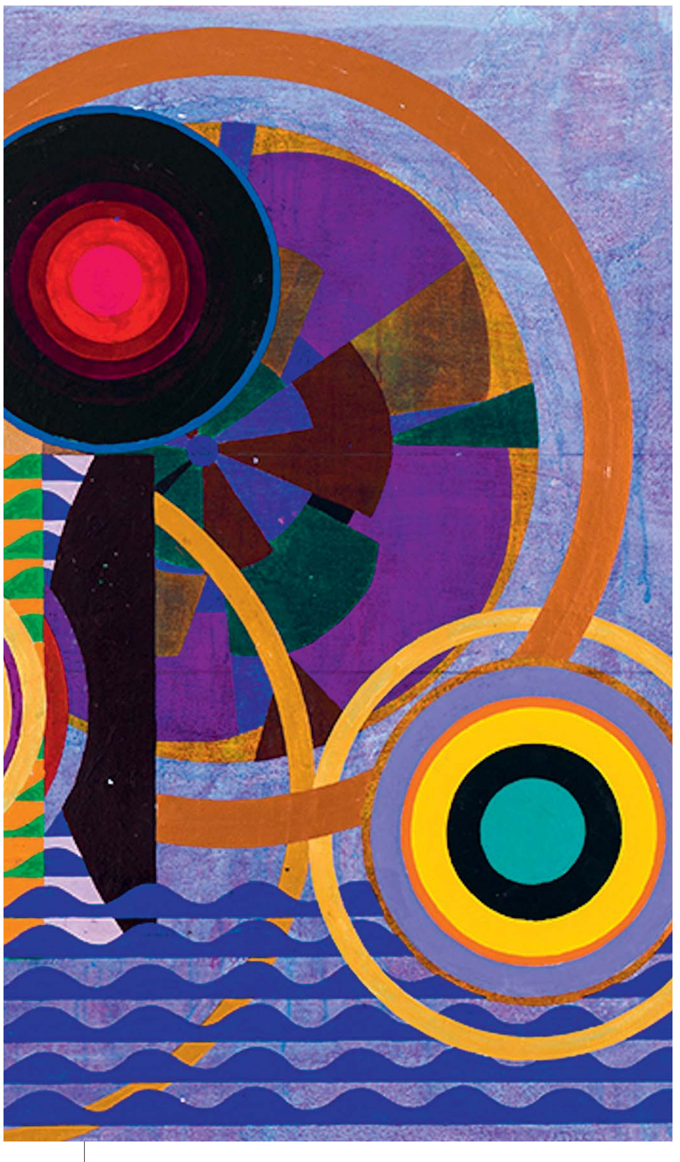
To bring new heat to these ideas she turned to Rio, taking inspiration from its architecture and vernacular culture. Her graduate works collaging spangled carnival fabrics were inspired by the spectacular creations of the great carnival designer Fernando Pinto, while historical dress and women's domestic labour making lace and crochet was another early reference. In 1989 she began developing her signature transfer technique, using cut-out plastic shapes loaded with paint to imprint forms on the canvas. The resulting surfaces have intense colours but are not poster-smooth. Rather they're visibly layered, textured and cracked.

At Turner Contemporary, Milhazes' earliest paintings will come as a surprise to those familiar with the artist's later bold abstractions. Recalling lacework, wallpaper and floral fabric prints, their patterns are looser and more obviously hand-worked. Flowers, though, are a constant motif and not just because of what Milhazes sees in Rio's famed botanical gardens or national park. "They ornament the sad moments, the beautiful moments, and are part of people's life," she says.

As her vision progresses, the compositions become staggeringly complex. In Maracorola, an enormous 2015 painting of almost three metres, she composes a landscape with pulsing hoops, waves, vegetal squiggles and a blazing sun across a chequerboard ground. It's a controlled riot of form and colour, with two key motifs: the circle and wave. "The circle is an organic shape and has no end," she says. "It's spiritual and meditative. My interest is more about movement, though. You never really find the centre in my work. I call it a mathematical dream."

Inspired by Rio's coast and parks, Milhazes has grown more interested in nature lately, and it is a focus of her Margate exhibition. "We've done so much damage; it's not just about stopping that but also examining our hope for nature to renew," she says. "I'm an optimist and I want to show how much we need the breath of the leaves, the water, sky and sun. My work is about life. Wherever it's shown, people connect to it."

*Beatriz Milhazes: Maresias is at Turner Contemporary, Margate, 27 May to 10 September.*





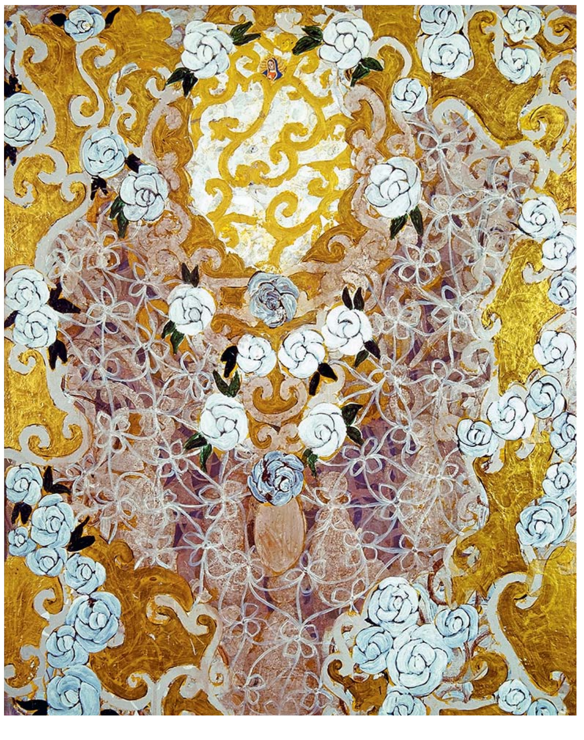
↙ **A Casa da Maria (1992)**
In one of the earliest works in the show, Milhazes draws on the history of dressmaking and women's domestic labour in Brazil, referencing "the kind of crochet my grandmother used to do". Its gold palette recalls church ornamentation.

↓ **Douradinha em cinza e marrom (2016)**
This eye-popping recent work, whose geometric forms pulse outwards from its citrus centre, shows Milhazes's pioneering use of figurative elements – here flowers and leaves – in abstract painting.

←← **Maracorola (2015)**
Milhazes sees this vast painting as combining key aspects of her development as an artist, including how she thinks of composition in terms of landscape's possibilities. It explores the sea's rhythms, seen clearly in the rippling waveforms.

← **Maresias (2002)**
This work gives Milhazes' exhibition its title, and means "sea air". Like one of her forebears, the avant-garde French artist Sonia Delaunay, Milhazes has explored buzzing circular forms. This painting suggests multiple references, from mandalas to targets and floral decoration.

## 'You never really find the centre in my work. I call it a mathematical dream'





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# BOOKS

ESSAYS, FICTION *and* NONFICTION REVIEWS

## ‘Who has permission to tell this story? That’s the wrong question’

Rebecca F Kuang began her bestselling fantasy trilogy at 19, followed by Babel, a dark academia hit. Next up? A satire of the publishing industry. She tells *Rebecca Liu* why she won’t write in the same genre twice

# 'You have to imagine outside of your lived experience – to write truthfully, with compassion'

IF I WERE A DEBUT WRITER, I wouldn't have dared to write this book," Rebecca F Kuang says from her home in Boston. Then again, she wouldn't have been able to. Her new thriller, Yellowface, could only have been written by an author familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the publishing industry: its petty politics, its bad faith, its best intentions gone hilariously awry. In the novel, which tells the story of a white writer who claims a dead Chinese friend's manuscript as her own, the industry's dark side is satirised with delicious cynicism: how authors are questionably packaged and marketed; how bestsellers are often selected in advance and boosted with money long before they hit the shelves; and how marginalised authors and staff are ignored, belittled and underpaid. An Instagram post earlier this year shows the 26-year-old author holding up an early copy of the book, showing its eye-catching lemon yellow cover; it is captioned "in 2023 we get mad spill the beans and don't care".

Kuang first made her name with the Poppy War trilogy, an award-winning fantasy series that explores the idea, as she puts it, "what if Mao had been a teenage girl?" Set in a country resembling medieval-era China, it tells the story of Rin, an ambitious girl from the southern peasantry who enters the nation's most prestigious military academy. Many events in the trilogy are inspired by 20th-century Chinese history: like her historical counterpart, Rin battles occupiers from a neighbouring island in the east; builds a guerrilla peasant insurrection, complete with a long march through the country; and spars with a more established rival backed by western powers. That was followed by the bestseller – and runaway BookTok hit – Babel, which follows a group of language students at Victorian-era Oxford University who get drawn into the first opium war. There's magic, there's intrigue, and there's imperial England, grand, glittering and increasingly troubling to some of the students, who find themselves struggling to simply go to the balls and sip the champagne.

Kuang drafted Yellowface in the summer of 2021, a time of lockdown "when all the isolation and desperation and depression was reaching a peak". Unlike her previous historical fantasies, it is strikingly topical: it includes sensitivity readers, Twitter pile-ons and professional jealousies thinly disguised as socially minded critique.

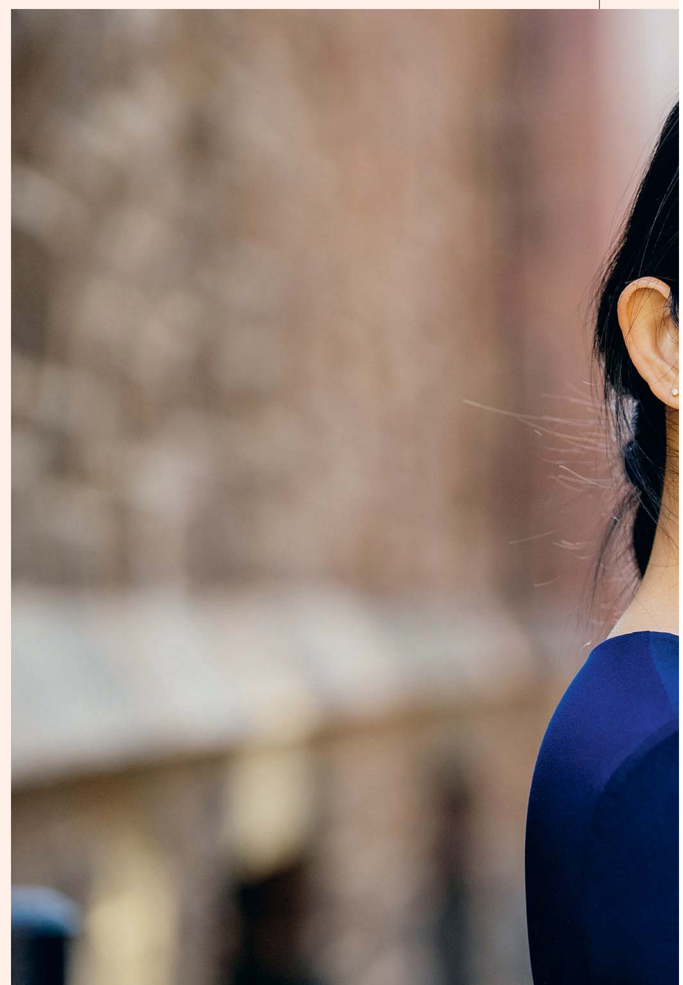
"I get bored really easily," Kuang says, an array of books on the shelf behind her, next to what looks like a fluffy toy cat. "I'm never going to write a project in the same genre twice, because there are just too many forms of storytelling that I want to experiment with, and not enough years in my life." Yellowface was written just after she submitted Babel, which she describes as a "chunky, pondering Dickensian bildungsroman"; looking for a dramatically different project, she alighted on a "zippy" satire for the social media age. The dramas of the literary world seemed like a perfect fit. "Publishing, like many entertainment industries, is so full of drama," she says. "I think writers are particularly good at taking small scandals and blowing them out of proportion."

The industry at the time was coming to a reckoning with its track record on race, sparked by the global Black Lives Matter protests: online, there were discussions about which stories were being told, who was getting paid more, who was getting promoted. Yellowface's protagonist, who describes herself as a boring "brown-eyed, brown-haired June Hayward from Philly", is viciously jealous of fellow writer Athena Liu, a "beautiful, Yale-educated, international, ambiguously queer woman of colour", whose education in British boarding schools equips her with "a posh, unplaceable foreign accent". "Publishing picks a winner," June thinks; Athena, with her string of bestsellers, is the anointed one. After Athena suddenly dies, June discovers a manuscript she had been working on, about the 95,000-strong Chinese Labour Corps who supported Britain in the first world war. It's intimidatingly good. When June polishes it up and passes it off as her own, the book shoots her to literary stardom.

Reviewers then debate June's right to tell the story, echoing familiar conversations on whether authors should write about characters and histories outside their own race or lived experiences. In Yellowface, that initial query spirals into increasingly outlandish backlashes, and everything that was once coherent and proportionate disappears under a mountain of tweets. Kuang's view, however, is clearer. "I really do not like this framework," she says. Concerns about "who has permission to tell these stories, or who has the right, or who is qualified" seem like "the wrong questions to ask".

"We're storytellers, and the point of storytelling is, among other things, to imagine outside of your lived experience and empathise with people who are not you, and to ideally write truthfully, and with compassion, a whole range of characters," she continues. "Otherwise all we could ever publish are memoirs and autobiographies and nobody wants that." For her, more interesting is *how* authors approach these stories: "Are they engaging critically with tropes and stereotypes that already exist in the genre? Or are they just replicating them? What is their relationship to the people who are being represented?" And, "most importantly, does the work do something interesting? Is it good?" While some concerns about the "permission to speak" come from desires to support underrepresented authors, Kuang thinks it "usually gets wielded as a double-edged sword against marginalised writers, to pigeonhole them into only writing about their marginalised experiences. And I *hate* this. It really functions as another form of gatekeeping."

Besides, Athena Liu – wealthy, celebrity-adjacent, who writes on a bespoke typewriter in her gorgeous New York apartment – is an awkward emissary in her own right for the Chinese Labour Corps, many of them indigent farm labourers who were later airbrushed out of monuments to the international war effort. Her character complicates superficial approaches to diversity in the industry, Kuang points out.



M SCOTT BRAUER/THE GUARDIAN

"There is a fairly widespread sentiment by now that the most over-represented Asian Americans tend to be East Asians, light-skinned Chinese Americans whose parents are professors who went to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, et cetera," she says, before mentioning books in Asian American studies – Lisa Lowe's Immigrant Acts and Kandice Chuh's Imagine Otherwise – that instead recognise a multiplicity of experiences. "There is no singular Asian American experience, and studying Asian Americans just means studying all of those different waves of migration."

Her character Athena is "completely oblivious about her class privilege", she says, describing her as an "Asian American who thinks she is representative of everybody". Kuang deliberately includes a scene in which Athena expresses her dislike of mentoring younger Asian American writers, to show how "she's realised that her value [in the literary world] is being able to explain Asians to everybody else, which is partly why she's so threatened by and dislikes younger writers who reach out to her".

Kuang credits her own mentors for teaching her how to "survive online", and her family for encouraging an early love of storytelling. Born in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou to parents who immigrated to Dallas, Texas, when she was four, she grew up in a "very literary household".

Her father, a voracious reader, would print out copies



Cover: M Scott Brauer



of novels in the public domain, staple the pages, and read them with her. "We'd sit down and read Pride and Prejudice together. That is how I learned English." At 11, she was introduced to Animal Farm ("I thought it was a fun bedtime story about animals in a farm being ridiculous") and Nineteen Eighty-Four ("I had no idea what the novel was really about"). Meanwhile, her primary school had an annual writing programme in which parents would help type up students' stories, and bind them into manuscripts – to her, it was "the most exciting thing". In her final year, she submitted a 10-page story about a soldier fighting the British during the American Revolution. "I was 10 years old. And the title is Liberty or Death. So that tells you everything."

Storytelling began as a way to "assimilate: to learn English", and to understand her new home. "I didn't conceive of it [as such] at the time," but in retrospect, it was driven by a need to discover "the mythological landscape that white Americans, or white Texans, live in".

She was, and still is, most drawn to fantasy books. "When you're a little kid, you aren't really thinking about genre distinctions," she says. "The world of the Percy Jackson series and the world of Nancy Drew were all equally foreign to me and equally fun to play around." Titles like "speculative fiction" and "literary fiction" read like "artificial industry labels" to Kuang. "It really does not make sense to categorise books this way. Kazuo Ishiguro: you'd never find his books in the sci-fi fantasy section, but The Buried Giant is clearly fantasy. And Never Let Me Go is dystopian science fiction."

Kuang began writing the Poppy War trilogy at 19, during a year off from her studies in Chinese history at Georgetown University. She was in Beijing, teaching students how to debate during the day, and wanted a way to pass the time in the evenings. That year, she began learning more about her family history. Kuang's grandparents lived through the second Sino-Japanese war; her father was a Beijing university student protester at Tiananmen Square in June 1989, and saw his friends die.

Did she know much Chinese history before university? "I knew nothing," she replies, other than being vaguely aware that "Chairman Mao was a person, and the Cultural Revolution had happened. But we had no understanding of what that actually meant, or what a deep impact it had had not just on our family, but almost every single Chinese American immigrant family."

Some Chinese American families, Kuang says, "try to leave their ghosts behind them, and the journey to the US marks a clean break": there's a sense that "from now on, we're Chinese Americans, we're not Chinese any more, that history, that baggage, doesn't have to affect us". She understands the impulse. "I'm very sympathetic to this attitude because who doesn't want to make a fresh start?" But as a result, "you have a lot of young Chinese American readers who have no idea what happened to their families, because their parents won't talk about it with them. And that doesn't mean the trauma goes away. It still exists, it's just unspoken."

She considered exploring her family history through biography but realised that would have involved making people relive their pain. Fantasy, however, gives the mind more space to roam, creating a familiar yet distant universe with its own logic, hierarchies and possibilities. "I've met a lot of readers who thought reading the trilogy was kind of a cathartic experience," she says. That many then went on to read nonfiction Chinese history books "warms my nerdy heart".

Today Kuang is studying for a PhD in Chinese literature at Yale University (she splits her time between New Haven and Boston). She was previously a master's student at Cambridge, then Oxford, where her studies were cut short because of the pandemic. "I never got a sense of closure with Oxford, which is why I think I have written about it incessantly," she says of her 2022 novel Babel.

She doubted whether it would be popular – "so much of that book is just etymology lectures", as well as a bracing critique of the British empire – but it was quickly embraced by TikTok, particularly by "dark academia" enthusiasts, an internet subculture celebrating knee-high socks and black robes, gothic spires and reading Keats by candlelight. University, Kuang says, "is this really exceptional time, when you're forming your own identity as an independent adult. And you're in this very artificial, closed environment with other unformed souls figuring things out at the same time. So it's a place where this magical alchemy of friendship happens."

In Yellowface, June looks over the stories she wrote as a teenager and reminisces about a time when writing was full of joy and freedom, rather than dominated by competition, gossip and self-promotion. "We don't talk enough about what the contemporary literary world does to writers' mental health," Kuang says. "We live in a particular moment where everyone's more interconnected than ever, but also more isolated than ever. At any given point, you can just log on to the internet and find out what thousands of people are saying about you and your work." There's the endless hustle: comparisons over Goodreads ratings, the marketing budget your publisher has set aside for you, how many posts they've made about your book on Instagram. That authors are expected to go through the process and remain "completely unfazed and grounded" is a "ridiculous requirement", she says. "It's absolutely soul-shattering to have yourself, your identity, and something you've spent years pouring your heart and soul into be dissected and critiqued online in ways that you never intended."

Kuang remains cynical about the publishing industry, pointing to how pledges made in 2021 to support diversity have fallen through. "In the end, it was a lot of chatter, but no substantive support for those authors, no real commitment to diversify lists, or the faces of people working on the other side of publishing." Staff at HarperCollins, her publisher, went on strike for better pay and working conditions while the novel was in production – Kuang has co-hosted strike rallies for the union. When I ask her about her hopes for the publishing industry, and for her own writing going forward, her answer to the first is immediate: "I hope everyone unionises."

And for herself? She's working on another book, called Katabasis. She tells me she's thinking about "nonsense literature", by which she means Alice in Wonderland-esque stories set in worlds that "don't make sense". She's also interested "in paradoxes of rational choice and decision making", and "how you can make a series of decisions and, every step of the way, think you are headed towards a better outcome and then find yourself worse off than you were before". (This, she says, is "a good metaphor for grad school".) And lastly, power, relationships, and abuse within the academy. "Academia is this bizarre, closed world in which if you cross one person, they can ruin the rest of your life." The question of what to do when you've been so worn down by it forms "the beating heart of the novel".

She doesn't divulge much about its plot – though confirms, contrary to some online discussion, that it is not a romcom. But it is clear that her next work will be a dramatic departure from Yellowface. "As long as I'm passionately curious about a topic, at least one other person is going to follow me down that rabbit hole," she rationalises. If it is difficult to tell what she's going to do next, then that is the point, she says. "It's only going to get weirder from here."

*Yellowface is published by HarperCollins on Thursday.*

A bombed building in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine



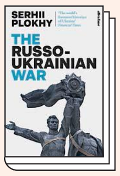
METIN AKTAS/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY

# The first draft of history

## An impressive account of the origins and early stages of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

*John Simpson*

**HISTORY**
**The Russo-Ukrainian War**
*Serhii Plokhy*
ALLEN LANE, £25




BY THE TIME this review appears, the big Ukrainian counter-offensive may have begun. On its success or failure will depend the future course of the war. In February, when the detailed planning for the Big Push was already starting, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy told me how nervous he was about it. Such frankness is typical of him. A charming, natural-seeming former actor, he has brought his professional abilities to the job of representing Ukraine at the highest level: providing the roar, he says, channelling Winston Churchill.

We know that the United States believes Ukraine's counter-offensive won't ultimately succeed, because we've seen the leaked documents that say so. But, of course, on the morning of 24 February 2022, Washington was sure the Russians would capture Kyiv within days – as were the Russians themselves. Zelenskiy's decision to stay put, against American advice, was one of the main reasons Ukraine has proved so successful. So, as historian Serhii Plokhy shows in this sober, thoughtful, honest account of the war up to now, was the courage and grit of the 300 Ukrainian soldiers guarding Hostomel Airport outside Kyiv, who shot down several Russian helicopters and ensured that even when the others landed they didn't have control of the skies.

Basically, though, the Russians defeated themselves, with their shocking incompetence. Some of the tanks destroyed on the approaches to Kyiv contained parade uniforms for the expected victory celebrations, and the invaders brought no more than three days' worth of food with them. Russian military intelligence had lined up various senior Ukrainians to take control in Kyiv; but when they saw Russia's failure at Hostomel they backed down abruptly. That morning the Kremlin's press department had put out a statement talking about the imminent overthrow of "the band of drug addicts and neo-Nazis" that had "taken the whole Ukrainian people hostage". By the afternoon, when the inhabitants of Kyiv failed to welcome their liberators as Putin had been told to expect, that approach wasn't looking so good.

Ukraine's army has done well for three main reasons. Its morale has been sky high. The weaponry that Nato has supplied is mostly a lot better than Russia's. (To that extent, the Kremlin's self-pitying claims of being at war with Nato are correct.) The third reason is the remarkable transformation in the military doctrine of the Ukrainian forces. When a high-powered Nato military team visited Kyiv before Russia's takeover of Crimea in 2014, it found that the Ukrainian army was much like the Russian one, and the Soviet army before them: rather than take a decision and risk punishment, junior officers would pass the buck to their seniors, and the seniors would refer upwards to Moscow. The Nato team taught the Ukrainians that any decision, even a wrong one, was better than no decision at all, and that, cowardice or treachery excepted, there should be no punishment for orders that turned out to be wrong. Liberated by this, the Ukrainian forces have made the Russians look sclerotic and antiquated. Whatever happens now, Putin has demonstrated Russia's incompetence for the whole world to see.

This book is appearing far too soon to be a definitive account of the war, of course. Plokhy, a Harvard professor of Ukrainian background and the author of the magnificent Chernobyl: History of a Tragedy, says himself that it arose from the "shock, pain, frustration, and anger" caused by the invasion; yet it is a fine, scholarly, unemotional chronicling of the war's origins and early stages. It comes alive when it uses diaries and testimony from people in places like Bucha, outside Kyiv, where 1,650 were killed, nearly half of them shot at point-blank range, sometimes after unspeakable torture. Yet Plokhy keeps his academic distance. There is no ranting.

Did the US promise Russia it wouldn't expand Nato beyond the borders of East Germany? If some members of the George HW Bush administration did say this, it was entirely unofficial: no such promises were made public. Should Nato have expanded to take in so much of Russia's former empire? "You have no idea how desperate the Baltic states, Poland, the Czechs, the Romanians and the others are to join," a senior Nato diplomat told me at the time. "They're yelling at us that we've got to protect them in case Russia comes calling." The invasion of Ukraine shows how right they were; Putin's assurances have turned out to be utterly meaningless. In March 2014, after capturing Crimea in contravention of two international treaties, he promised not to take any more Ukrainian territory. By February 2022 he was calling the whole of Ukraine "historically Russian land".

The invasion, and its accompanying atrocities, have made any simplistic Elon Musk-style "Crimea for Donbas" deal impossible for years to come. Anything can happen now: a sudden victory for Ukraine, a long and bitter stalemate, the overthrow of Putin, all-out nuclear war. This impressive and valuable book can't tell us which. But it is a clear, reliable and (in the circumstances) remarkably calm account of how we got here.

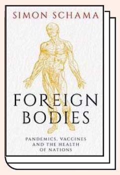
*To buy a copy for £21.25 go to guardianbookshop.com*

# Scientists to the rescue

## Lessons from the past on fighting pandemics

*Jerry Brotton*

**HISTORY**




**Foreign Bodies**
Pandemics, Vaccines and the Health of Nations
*Simon Schama*
**SIMON & SCHUSTER, £30**

In the end," writes Simon Schama at the beginning of his extraordinary book on pandemics old and new, "all history is natural history." Foreign Bodies is ostensibly an account of the bacteriologists and epidemiologists who studied the natural history of infectious diseases from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries, developing vaccines and saving millions from smallpox, cholera and the plague. But as its subtitle suggests, it is also a reflection on the political and scientific conflicts of the Covid pandemic, and the failure of contemporary leaders to coordinate a scientifically driven global response to the virus.

Over millennia, biological and environmental imperatives rather than states and empires have shaped human destiny. Now capitalism's degradation of the planet threatens our future survival. Zoonosis – the transmission of infectious diseases from animals to humans – has always bedevilled humanity, but the risks are increasing as we encroach further into natural habitats. The Global Virome project estimates that there are more than half a million unknown viruses with zoonotic potential; since 1980 sub-equatorial regions have experienced viral outbreaks every eight months; the Sars epidemic of 2003-4 has now been traced back to dragon-tiger-phoenix soup, a combination of palm civet meat, chrysanthemum petals and snake served in restaurants in southern China. If these facts are sobering, the response of our politicians, described with measured fury by Schama, is terrifying: now as before, international cooperation founders as national tribalism belittles science and its "cosmopolitan" practitioners.

What can history tell us about how we got here, and how to respond in the future? The answer is conveyed through a meticulous retelling of a terrible yet scientifically innovative period, beginning with the cholera pandemics of the 1850s and taking in a three-decade epidemic of bubonic plague that by the 1920s had killed a staggering 12 million people, mostly in India. White, male, Christian European colonial authorities, obsessed with segregation and sanitation, doused homes with carbolic and limewash. When that didn't work they were forced to turn to outsiders: migrants, exiles – the "foreign bodies" of the title – who challenged prevailing social and scientific assumptions.

One of these was the "culturally hybrid prodigy" Waldemar Mordechai Wolff Haffkine. A Ukrainian Jew, Haffkine took up arms during the Odessa pogrom of 1881 before becoming a protege of Élie Mechnikov, the founder of immunology. Haffkine eventually developed a cholera vaccine, which he tested on himself in 1892. It worked, and by 1893 he was in India inoculating 42,000 villagers, slum dwellers and soldiers a year. In 1897 he developed a plague vaccine in Bombay, once again testing it on himself, and created the world's first large-scale vaccine production line. By 1902 more than 2 million Indians had been protected.

In November that year, however, a contaminated bottle of vaccine killed 19 people in a Punjabi village. In what became known as the Little Dreyfus affair, the British authorities hung Haffkine out to dry – exhibiting barely disguised antisemitism – despite evidence that he was not responsible. He was defended by the Nobel prize-winning doctor Sir Ronald Ross against "the common enemy: 'institutional barbarism'; the disrespect for science, the unconscionable *inattentiveness* to its illuminating knowledge, by those entrusted with public health". Here as elsewhere echoes of the Covid era abound, leading Schama to a passionate defence of scientists like Dr Anthony Fauci. Something about the inoculators and epidemiologists, he writes, always gets "under the skin of public tribunes for whom nothing, certainly not epidemiology, is politics-free".

But if societies are to fortify themselves for a zoonotic future they will need to rely on exiles and émigrés, cosmopolitan and liminal individuals, those benign "foreign bodies" Schama describes with such careful attention. There are, in fact, "no foreigners, only familiars, only a single precious chain of connection that we snap at our utmost peril," he declares. In doing so, he makes an urgent case for building a better future on our toxic past.

*Jerry Brotton is professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary, University of London. To buy a copy of Foreign Bodies for £26.40 go to guardianbookshop.com*

Malaysian workers in protective clothing in 2020



AHMAD YUSNI/EPA

# Second life

## A woman comes of age on the internet

*Maeve Higgins*

**MEMOIR**




**Is This OK?**
One Woman's Search for Connection Online
*Harriet Gibsone*
**PICADOR, £16.99**

Harriet the Spy is a 1964 childrens' book about a little girl who snoops relentlessly on her neighbours. Harriet Gibsone did the same thing when she was young. Now in her late 30s, she still shares with the fictional Harriet a powerful imagination and endless fascination with others. Harriet the Spy was banned in a number of American schools; apparently morally upright people didn't approve of watchful girls trying to figure out the world on their own terms. I love these characters, nurturing as they do some feeling of control in a world where they do not have any.

Is This OK? is a memoir, full of finely told stories that were once secrets existing only in the writer's mind; addictions, obsessions, weirdnesses. Gibsone came of age at the same time as the internet, her own development shaped by its strange currents. She chooses episodes from her life and makes some of them funny – laugh-out-loud-on-the-train funny; some of them are frightening and sad. Many illuminate a bigger truth about living at this peculiar time and in the grey area between the online and offline worlds. That is, of course, where many of us spend hours each day, without fully realising it, even as researchers warn us of the negative impact on self-esteem and mental health.

We didn't know all of that when we first went online, back when the internet seemed to offer a thrilling social freedom. In 2001, when Gibsone was 14, she discovered MSN messenger, which rapidly became, as she puts it, "an urgent state of being". She devoted herself to chatting online, pretending to be older, more sexual, and simply different from the awkward young woman she really was. This pattern continued as the platforms multiplied with each passing year; "As a woman prone to slow reaction times and meekness in real life, I could now partake in meaningful conversations and have an instant connection to someone without the threat of tending to them physically."

The word "threat" is well chosen. Gibsone's early romantic and sexual relationships are troubled. Some verge on abusive, and she turns the pain they inflict inwards. She torments herself with hunger, alcohol, and generally abnegates herself to meet others' needs. Though drawn to music and art, she is not yet able to claim the power to create for herself. It's comforting to know that this book is proof of her ultimate success in that respect. But it comes slowly. At first, instead of nurturing her own creativity, she makes a career out of tending to that flame in others. She becomes a music and culture editor at the Guardian, where she remains a contributor.

She was in her early 30s when she experienced a host of alarming and mysterious symptoms: sweating, bloating, emotional instability and brain fog, leading to a diagnosis of premature ovarian insufficiency, one cause of early menopause. She struggles hard to get pregnant via a donor, and to give birth, and her account of both is quite stunning. The misogynistic resistance to women writing frankly about birth and motherhood means that such work is still too rare. The power and horror of bearing children have been covered with skill and clarity by writers such as Rachel Cusk in A Life's Work and Anne Enright in Making Babies. Gibsone owns her place among them with a bloodied confidence after the fight it took to get there.

Is This OK? swings between silliness and profundity; Gibsone is a writer taking herself seriously but having fun while doing it. This is a book to hold on to and one to share, a warning and a map created by a watchful girl, telling others what may lie ahead.

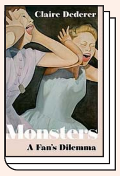
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# Beauty and the beast

## Can we love the art of a morally repugnant artist?

*Kathryn Hughes*

**SOCIETY**
**Monsters**
A Fan's Dilemma
*Claire Dederer*
HODDER & STOUGHTON, £20




Is it OK to love a film, a book or a painting if its maker turns out to be a bad person? Not just lovable aw-shucks everyday bad, the sort who forgets to pick the kids up because he or she is too busy making art, but someone whose behaviour is immoral, illegal or both? A monster, in fact.

This is the dilemma that Claire Dederer addresses in this exhilarating, gnarly inquiry into the business of separating the author's repugnant life from his or her magnificent work. It is hardly a new topic – in the middle of the last century, the proponents of New Criticism were arguing about what they called the "biographical fallacy" and duly concluding that the critic should set aside an artist's life and concentrate on their work alone.

Seventy years on, and the problem of what to do about great art by horrible people has roared back, taking on slightly different flavours in this age of #MeToo and social media "cancellation". These days Dederer finds herself wondering if it's ever OK to enjoy reruns of The Cosby Show. Can we listen to Michael Jackson if we stick to the stuff he made in his prepubescent Jackson 5 days?

And most crucially of all for Dederer, who spent her early career as a film critic, how do we solve a problem like Roman Polanski? When she rewatches Chinatown, his Oscar-winning masterpiece from 1974, is she tacitly condoning his statutory rape of a 13-year-old school girl just three years later? Polanski is a particularly knotty case, says Dederer, because his own biography is the stuff of nightmares. His mother died in Auschwitz and his pregnant wife Sharon Tate was murdered by the Manson "family" in 1969. Trying to weigh Polanski's trauma against the "stain" of his later criminality makes your head hurt, which is why Dederer finds herself wishing for a moral calculator that would do this kind of thinking for her. She'd punch in all the salient biographic details and, hey presto, the machine would "spit out a verdict".

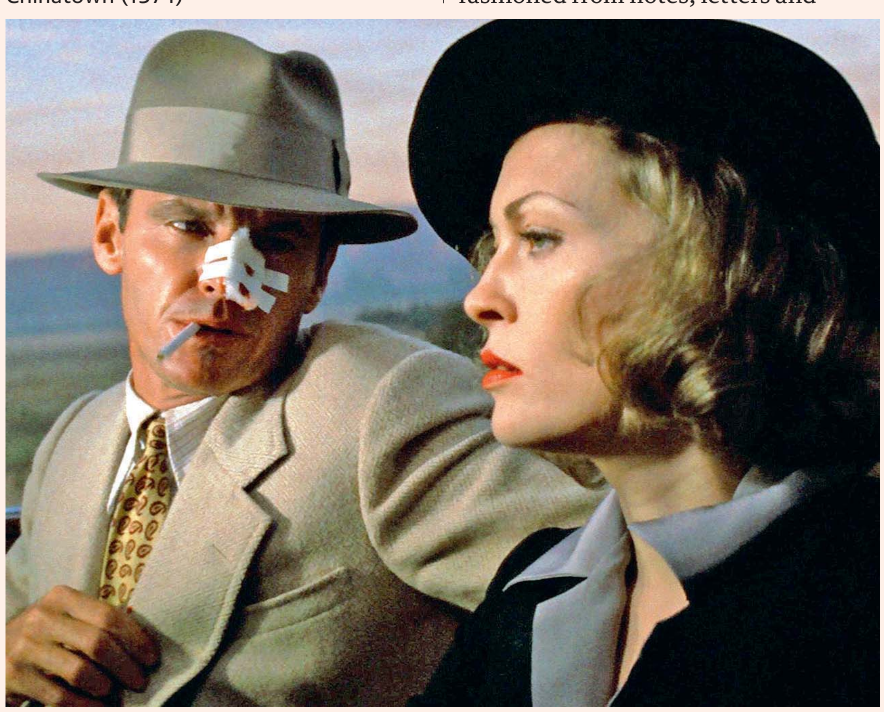
The impulse to farm out the decision to an external authority sounds hopelessly naive – but then, asks Dederer, isn't there something equally ridiculous about thinking that whether we choose to enjoy a particular piece of art or not is going to change anything?

Far more productive, she suggests, is for us to start being honest about our own monstrosity. Indeed, she believes that until we accept our own capacity for bad behaviour then we are stuck in the worst of all worlds – denying ourselves the satisfaction of consuming art that moves us in ways we don't quite understand yet failing to get to grips with why we keep returning to it.

To get things going, Dederer offers up her own monstrousness. She is a mother who is also a writer, which means that she has been guilty of negligence on those occasions when she has accepted invitations for residential fellowships which have taken her away from home for weeks at a time. Worse still, she has hugged herself with relieved glee while doing it. On top of this, she spent 10 years as a functioning alcoholic, which is not something that usually combines well with engaged and committed family life.

Dederer doesn't go into details since this is not a confessional memoir and that is not the point. Instead she shows us her own monstrosity as a way of beginning to breakdown the imaginary cordon sanitaire we habitually draw around artists whose behaviour repels us. We can decide, in a panic of self-righteousness, to cast all their work aside and consign it to a cultural deep freeze. Or we can choose instead to keep it in full view, with gratitude and wonder that such saving beauty is still possible amid the moral grot in which we all live.

*To buy a copy for £17.60 go to guardianbookshop.com*



Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway in Roman Polanski's Chinatown (1974)

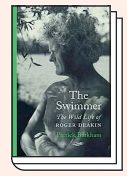
PARAMOUNT PICTURES/ALLSTAR

# Reflecting waters

## A tapestry-like life of the influential nature lover

*Amy-Jane Beer*

**BIOGRAPHY**
**The Swimmer**
The Wild Life of Roger Deakin
*Patrick Barkham*
HAMISH HAMILTON, £20




For a writer who inspires such devotion, Roger Deakin's bibliography is short. He only published one book before he died in 2006, the celebrated Waterlog: A Swimmer's Journey Through Britain. Later came Wildwood, the epic arboreal treatise that was topped, tailed and published after his death, and then Notes from Walnut Tree Farm, gleaned from his copious jottings about life in the Suffolk ruin he restored and continued to share with wildlife that had moved in during the years of dilapidation.

Waterlog is often credited with launching the modern outdoor swimming movement, and like many others, I have travelled in Deakin's damp footprints. I've visited Walnut Tree Farm, kept much as it was by the new owners, swum in the moat Deakin reinstated and walked the ancient green lane saved by his campaigning energy.

The Swimmer is an unconventional biography of an unconventional person. In his introduction, the Guardian journalist Patrick Barkham explains that he effectively ripped up a 90,000-word draft he'd laboured on for two years, abandoning an attempt at definitiveness that he felt was contrary to the spirit of the man. What he delivers instead is a kind of tapestry fashioned from notes, letters and published works, with Deakin himself as principal narrator and some creative infill by Barkham writing in Deakin's voice. Given the previous mining of his notes and recordings, much of The Swimmer will feel familiar to fans. But the first-person narration is liberally interspersed with the impressions, memories and perspectives of dozens of interviewees – friends, relatives, colleagues and associates, pupils from a short but memorable stint as a teacher of English, and lovers, of whom there were many. These perspectives stir sediment into the clear waters of Deakin's narrative.

This is not unwelcome – in any love there is that moment when the object of our admiration is revealed to be not wholly who we thought. Not more, or less necessarily, but different, muddier. Here perhaps is that moment for Deakinites. Undoubtedly we're seeing the man more completely than before, perhaps more clearly than he saw himself. The schoolboy, the student, the ad man with a life split between London and Suffolk. The sociable outsider with a hectic, corvid intelligence; a compulsive, impulsive collector of objects, phrases and loves; someone who leaned hard into late-blooming celebrity but who was only really at ease in the water or at home. We pace the brick floor of the Walnut Tree Farm kitchen, eavesdrop on its indoor and outdoor bedrooms. We flinch when he lashes out at those closest to him.

Deakin was, in Barkham's view, a man determined "to resist the anchor, the mooring, the still water – and the deeps". His long-term partner, Serena Inskip, said of Waterlog: "We all read it and said 'Where's Roger?' ... There was a lot more in him than that but he couldn't get it out, it was too frightening." The person who perhaps knew him longest, Margot Waddell, mused that "he never swims below the surface ... I don't think he quite realised there was a choice." Her memorial address added that on the night he died Roger spoke of being able "to see a very deep hole". Perhaps if he finally looked into those deeps, he'd have seen something like this remarkable book.

Deakin likened the tendrils of the tumour that killed him to tree roots penetrating his brain and lived just long enough to be delighted by the concept of the wood wide web, a fitting mycelial metaphor for his relentless urge to make connections of his own. That mission has outlasted him, and this extraordinary insight into his life will lend new complexity and reach to the network.

*To buy a copy for £17.60 go to guardianbookshop.com*

FICTION



Fishing nets in Fort Kochi, Kerala

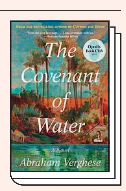
MARTIN HARVEY/THE GUARDIAN

# A curse in Kerala

## Water affects a family's fate in this enthralling epic, set across three generations

*Maaza Mengiste*

**The Covenant of Water**
*Abraham Verghese*
**GROVE, £20**




THE PHYSICIAN-WRITER Abraham Verghese's riveting, sprawling epic opens with a mother and her 12-year-old daughter crying. It is 1900 in Travancore, south India, today part of Kerala, and in the morning, the frightened girl is to marry a man who is 40 and a widower. She will do as she is told but she cannot imagine the future ahead. Her mother reassures her but soon her voice ebbs, her breathing slows, and then she is asleep, leaving her daughter awake. The body's need for rest overtakes the mother's anguish. And we are thus ushered into the next day and the girl's journey on a boat far from her childhood home.

Big Ammachi, as the girl will come to be known, will grow to love her husband; he, in turn, will treat her like the child she is for several more years. By the time she is 17, she will give birth to her first child, a daughter named Baby Mol. They live on their estate, Parambil, the labour handled dutifully by a man named Shamuel, who is part of the landless caste called the *pulayan*. Big Ammachi eventually has a son, Philipose, and he and Shamuel's young son, Joppan, are playmates, but when a school official prohibits Joppan from attending class, Big Ammachi finds herself struggling to explain the caste system that is forcing the friends to live increasingly segregated lives. "Its roots are deep and so ancient that it feels like a law of nature, like rivers going to the sea. But the pain in those innocent eyes reminds her of what is so easy to forget: the caste system is an abomination." Decades later, Philipose and Joppan will have uncomfortable conversations about what is owed by landowners to the *pulayan,* but any lingering anger that Joppan might have is put off for another generation.

Spanning from 1900 to 1977 in Kerala, The Covenant of Water reveals some of the contradictions of living in a colonised, segregated society. Dr Digby Kilgour, the lonely son of an impoverished alcoholic mother, flees Scotland for colonised India, only to discover that he is "oppressed in Glasgow; oppressor here. The thought depresses him." Yet the complicated questions that might develop as he negotiates with those increasingly fraught realities are set aside while he contends with his new hospital job and begins an affair with a woman who is married to a colleague. Tensions rise as that colleague makes a fatal medical error and places the blame on Digby. Any confrontation that would have occurred, however, is derailed by an accident that conveniently pushes Digby's storyline in another direction.

Big Ammachi watches her family expand and shrink through births and tragic deaths that involve a family curse connected to water. India gains independence. Her granddaughter, her namesake, enters medical school and tries to find the cause for this curse. Other characters make their appearance and multiple plotlines converge through encounters that rely heavily on coincidence and sudden incidents. Over the course of the book, people do not change as much as accumulate and shoulder new experiences.

The psychological and emotional growth that could have fostered deeper understandings and greater revelations remains unexplored. Verghese chooses instead to reckon with biological realities: disfiguring scars and developmental challenges, incurable afflictions and hereditary diseases, fatal accidents and debilitating addictions. The novel's authority lies not in the excavation of psychological ambiguities, but in the dawning awareness that each character is beholden to something much more powerful and more encompassing than emotional turmoil: the physical bodies they inhabit.

This is a novel – a splendid, enthralling one – about the body, about what characters inherit and what makes itself felt upon them. It is the body that contains ambiguities and mysteries. As in his international bestseller Cutting for Stone, Verghese's medical knowledge and his mesmerising attention to detail combine to create breathtaking, edge-of-your-seat scenes of survival and medical procedures that are difficult to forget. Tenderness permeates every page, at the same time as he is ruthless with the many ways his characters are made vulnerable by simply being alive. Those scenes when a person must fight for their life make for some of the most gripping episodes that I have read in some time.

At the beginning of the book, Big Ammachi, the young bride, looks out at her new home. It is "a child's fantasy world of rivulets and canals, a latticework of lakes and lagoons, a maze of backwaters and bottle-green lotus ponds; a vast circulatory system because, as her father used to say, all water is connected". This concept of connectedness, the sense of family that can extend to those unrelated by blood, is carried through nearly every chapter of this novel. "This is the covenant of water," a character thinks towards the end, "that they're all linked inescapably by their acts of commission and omission and no one stands alone."

The Covenant of Water contains a larger question of community and belonging, one that feels most important in these days of escalating political wars and tensions: is it possible to be fragile and wounded, and still necessary and loved? The answer is rendered with care by a writer who looks at the world with a doctor's knowing, merciful gaze. As much as any moral reckoning or catastrophic plot point, this is why literature, in all its comforting and challenging forms, matters.

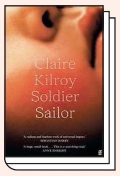
*To buy a copy for £17.60 go to guardianbookshop.com*

# Mother love

## An intense deep dive into the baby years

### *Sarah Crown*

**Soldier Sailor**
*Claire Kilroy*
**FABER, £16.99**




Claire Kilroy's first novel in 10 years is a whole-body experience: reading it was, for me, like being elbowed through a rip in the space-time continuum back into the chaotic, exhausting, lovesick fog of the baby and toddler years. Anyone who has endured "the blurred days and the blurred nights" of early motherhood – or indeed anyone contemplating the possibility of embarking on them – be warned. You're looking at a book-length panic attack.

The novel is brief but utterly remorseless – it comes at you full-throttle, as if delivered on a single breath. The internal monologue of a mother (the Soldier of the title) addressed to her son (Sailor), it exists, almost, outside of time. No context is provided, and only Soldier's perspective is given; this is her description, unqualified and unquestioned, of "all I had lost and all I had gained". That she's an unreliable narrator – manifestly, almost luxuriously so – is neither here nor there. The point is that, in a world that has diminished her, reduced her to the near-voiceless role of "mother", *this is her experience*. It's her account of the feeling of finding herself torn out of what she had believed was her real life and deposited in a sleep-deprived, incoherent parallel universe where achieving anything is momentous but anything that is achieved is both negligible and banal. "I produced a shoe only to find you'd pulled off your sock," she says of the teeth-grinding process of trying to leave the house. "I put the sock back on while you pulled off the other one. I put that one back on while you pulled off the first. Oh, it was all so stupid. People think that looking after an infant is basic. I know this because I once thought so myself."

It's her experience, but every woman (and as Soldier points out bitterly and bemusedly, it's almost always a woman) who's been in sole charge of a small child has lived through this. From the specific visceral sensations of motherhood to the battle to administer Calpol, the "domino effect" of lifting your child out of the buggy and watching it "tip over backwards weighted down by the nappy bag", the struggle of trying to buckle a writhing toddler into a car seat – it's all there.

And then there are parenthood's ur-scenarios: the heart-stopping near-misses between heads and swings in playgrounds, the trips to Ikea when you lose your child. These vignettes are so profoundly recognisable that questions of trustworthiness are shunted sideways. Soldier may not be a reliable narrator – she's too tired for that and, in fact, as the book progresses she draws attention to the wrinkles and holes in her monologue – but she is a truthful one. We know she's telling the truth because we've been there ourselves.

The person who absolutely isn't there, according to Soldier, is her husband. The father of her child, who appears on the edges of the action complaining that he has an early start at the office and texting "'*What does he eat?'* the one time he was left in charge", is almost cartoonishly awful: a repository for all the fury and grief and baffled resentment that formerly equal women feel when they're left holding the baby. He resents spending his "days off" shopping for nursery furniture. He forgets his son's antibiotics. He doesn't know what to put in the nappy bag and watches football while his wife packs it instead. There are moments when his frightfulness feels preposterous – but again, this is Soldier's experience. She's describing, it seemed to me, not so much a person as the feeling of having had a partner and having lost that partnership; the shock of discovering her relationship is not what she thought it was. "All along I had believed I was equal, when all along I was not," she says.

If Kilroy's novel ended here, it would have done more than enough to locate her among the ranks of motherhood's laureates alongside the likes of Helen Simpson, Rachel Cusk and Sarah Moss. But it doesn't. The final section expands – abruptly, beautifully, agonisingly – to grapple with the true existential crisis at the heart of motherhood: the understanding, born with the baby, that we're all time's prisoners and "it will do us in in the end". We crawl out, ultimately, from the chaos of early motherhood, but the love continues to obliterate us. "I wasn't scared of dying until you were born," Soldier says towards the novel's close. Forget the sleepless nights; that's the real horror, right there.

*To buy a copy for £14.95 go to guardianbookshop.com*

# Off the leash

## A quirky comedy of sex, dogs and eccentricity

### *Sandra Newman*

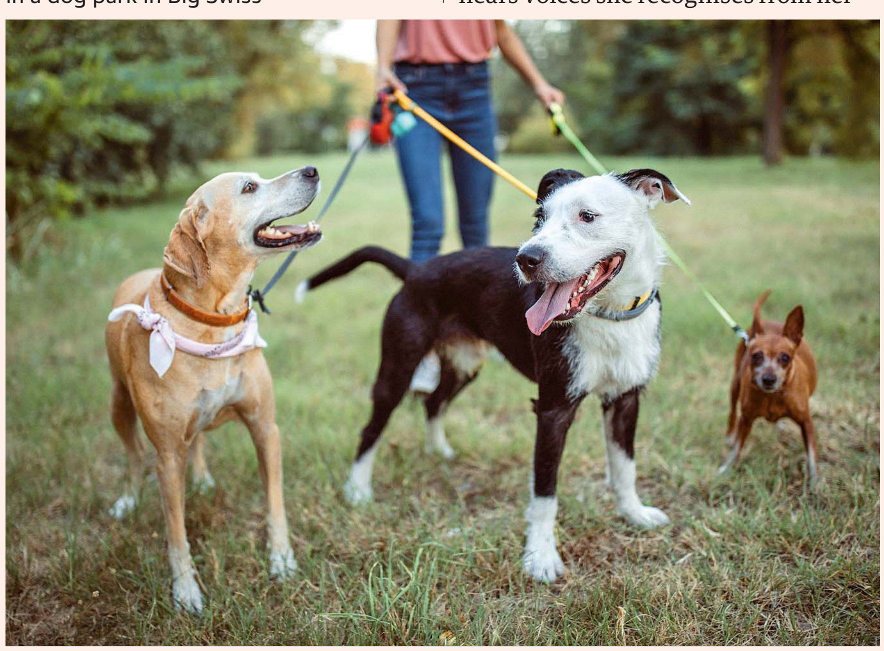
**Big Swiss**
*Jen Beagin*
**FABER, £16.99**




Big Swiss is set in Hudson, New York, a small town full of city people who have moved to the countryside to start new lives. The typical Hudsonite's story is: "I was a corporate lawyer in the city for years, and then I moved to Hudson and became a flower farmer/doll maker/antiques dealer/chef/arborist/alcoholic, and I never looked back." Narrator Greta works as an audio transcriber for a sex therapist who employs new agey methods such as gong baths and calls himself Om; as he tells Greta, "Everything in Hudson is a little on-the-nose."

Hudson is also small enough that everyone runs into everyone everywhere, and Greta regularly hears voices she recognises from her transcribing work; on a typical visit to a coffee shop, she will involuntarily peg one customer as the man who is sleeping with his sister-in-law, and another as the guy who describes his penis as "Darth Vader in a turtleneck". This has dramatic consequences when Greta becomes infatuated with one of the people she's transcribing, Flavia, a Swiss woman recovering from a brutal assault. Flavia has a voice "like a blade", a husband unable to give her an orgasm, a silver wolf-dog of unearthly beauty, and the habit of walking him in the same dog park where Greta walks her beloved Jack Russell.

Romance blossoms in a dog park in Big Swiss



SVETIKD/GETTY IMAGES

Big Swiss is a fluffy sex comedy with a dark underbelly. In fact, its dark underbelly has a darker underbelly, which is then startlingly fluffy. There are multiple trauma plotlines: Greta is emotionally stunted by her mother's suicide when she was 13; Flavia is still coping with aftershocks from the assault that almost killed her; even Greta's landlady, Sabine, has a dark secret and a recovery arc. Meanwhile, Flavia's attacker has been released from prison and may be stalking her. It's an abuse-themed love story with a dash of psychological thriller where everything is played for laughs. Somewhat miraculously, this mixture works. The voice is sharp, the plot is compelling, the jokes are funny and sometimes startling, as the very best comedy is; it's easy to forgive the odd moments when two elements clash.

What is sometimes a problem is Beagin's excessive use of quirky details. Everything and everyone is manically peculiar. Om's everyday garb is "a white fishnet tank top, a chunky cardigan, and white harem pants". Sabine shoplifts by secreting objects in her unusually dense hair. Every character, however minor, is assigned at least one bizarre trait – the habit of reading John O'Hara's novel BUtterfield 8 over and over; a fetish for performing cunnilingus with a napkin draped over the head, as if eating ortolan; a tendency to hallucinate Jason Bateman from stress. The decaying 18th-century house Greta shares with Sabine is infested at various points with stinkbugs, maggots, spiders, and 60,000 honeybees that have built a hive in the kitchen ceiling; its back yard features a stray rooster named Walter and two mini donkeys. Often the action stops dead while the characters deal with the latest beasts and grotesques, and it can come to feel as if there is a hive of 60,000 quirks living in the novel's ceiling. This becomes jarring in the sections dealing with suicide, a subject that just doesn't want to be silly.

But the book is salvaged, time and again, by Beagin's formidable wit and her ability to write. Every page is packed with good jokes, keen observations and idiosyncratically wonderful prose. A real standout were the sex scenes. "Her pussy looked like

advanced origami. A crisp pink lotus flower folded by a master. Greta briefly rearranged it with her mouth. The flower transformed into an acorn. Then a unicorn. Greta dragged her tongue over it diagonally three dozen times. Now it resembled three dragonflies languidly mating on a lily pad. She reached for her phone."

The shock of ending this paragraph with a nonconsensual photo is the natural/unnatural fun of Big Swiss in a nutshell. Because this is also a sneakily transgressive book; it affirms the value of screwed-up relationships that should never have been, and treats the most antisocial behaviour – adultery, drug addiction, intergenerational attraction, stalking, therapeutic malpractice – without judgment.

In my darker moments as a reviewer, I sometimes wonder if book reviews are even useful, given that different readers have such different tastes. With this book I found a sort of answer. I can recommend it even to people who might end up hating it. It made my brain do interesting, uncomfortable things and left me questioning my beliefs about attraction, grief and a dozen other fundamental things. It can be offensive, frustrating, even unconvincing, but it's never boring. It's giddy fluff with lashings of grit and a touch of holy fire.

*To buy a copy for £14.95 go to guardianbookshop.com*

## This boy's life

### Hope and brutality in a Roman empire brothel

*Alice Jolly*

**Sparrow**
*James Hynes*
PICADOR, £16.99



The narrator of James Hynes's novel is an orphaned slave boy who does not know his age, his origins or even his name. He lives in the crumbling city of Carthago Nova (now Cartagena in Spain) during the last days of the Roman empire. His world is confined to his place of forced labour, which is "a cramped, smoky kitchen and a narrow garden ten paces across".

The kitchen is part of Helicon, a brothel and tavern. Here, the boy sleeps in a corner "among the cockroaches and mouse pellets". He is fascinated by birds and so calls himself Sparrow, a name that allows him to enter an imaginative world where he can forget his fear and pain and fly high above the confines of his troubled existence.

Sparrow's only friend is Euterpe, one of the "wolves" (prostitutes). Euterpe tries to educate and care for Sparrow, but in the world of Helicon there is no place for kindness. The fear of death is ever-present and Euterpe has no power against the brothel manager, Audo. Sparrow tells us that "Audo is a hammer and every problem is a nail".

As the inhabitants of Carthago Nova turn to Christianity, the brothel starts to lose money and Audo becomes aware that Sparrow is "a pretty boy". "Reader, I know you know where this is going," says Sparrow. The reader does indeed know. Sparrow, though still a child, soon comes to know the "smack of a cock being sucked".

When one of the wolves, Melpomene, takes over the running of the brothel, there is hope that things might change. But for Melpomene "the whole world is a whorehouse" and she presses the other wolves to work even harder. Earning more tips is the only route to freedom.

Euterpe and Sparrow finally decide to attempt an escape. But from the beginning of the book, Sparrow has told the reader that no happy ending is possible. "No touching final reunion will ever be performed in this play. Nothing will be revealed, or redeemed or healed. The story will simply stop."

There is some wonderful writing in this novel. Sparrow's voice is original and moving and the gruelling work of the brothel becomes absolutely real. The wolves and their shifting relationships – by turns tender, competitive and bullying – are beautifully portrayed. Yet ultimately this book does not entirely succeed.

It is too long and the real action of the story does not start until halfway through. Also, the cruelty is relentless. A kitchen table abortion. Rape, beatings, murder. Runaway slaves with iron collars round their necks, slaves with their tongues cut out. All this is, of course, historically accurate.

But the details of brothel life come to seem gratuitous and the reader is cast in the uncomfortable role of voyeur. Usually, a writer uses foreshadowing techniques to keep the reader interested and to hint that some resolution is coming. Here, foreshadowing is used to kill any expectation of either resolution or meaning.

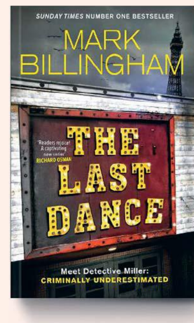
Of course, a novel does not need to redeem or heal. But the reader does expect to see some aspect of human life in a new light. Here it is certainly demonstrated that the Roman empire "is a mosaic of rape and murder and bastardy and forced labour". But the problem is that this is not new. In the prologue, Sparrow says: "This is just another book which changes nothing." It would have been interesting to get more of a sense of what Hynes wanted the reader to take away from this brutal story.

*To buy a copy for £14.95 go to guardianbookshop.com*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

# Crime and thrillers

### An expertly plotted new detective series; ghosts haunt a country pile; a cult mystery; and what the maids saw in Singapore. *By Laura Wilson*




**The Last Dance**
*Mark Billingham*
SPHERE, £22

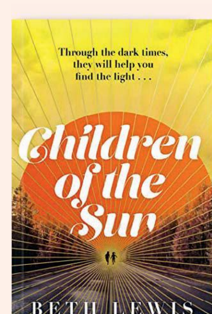
Set in Blackpool, Mark Billingham's new series starts with the killing of two men – one the heir to a crime empire, the other an IT consultant – in adjacent hotel bedrooms, and proceeds at a smart clip, expertly bedding in characters along the way. The protagonist, widowed DS Declan Miller, provides a novel spin on the emotionally-unfit-copper-returning-to-work-too-soon trope. His hobbies are ballroom dancing, pet rats and mentally discussing the case with his late wife, Alex, a police officer killed in the line of duty. A gobby maverick, Miller treats everything with a mixture of sarcasm and dad humour – perfectly balanced by his new work partner, Yamaha-riding thrash metal devotee DS Sara Xiu, who never, ever, gets the jokes. Billingham's Tom Thorne series set the bar very high indeed, but The Last Dance is well up to standard – funny, moving and expertly plotted.

**Grave Expectations**
*Alice Bell*
CORVUS, £14.99

Phantoms abound in Alice Bell's debut, a modern mashup of Ghosts, Blithe Spirit and Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased). Medium Claire Hendricks has an advantage over other table-tappers: not only can she actually see ghosts, but her best friend at school, Sophie, who was murdered at the age of 17, has hung out with her ever since. When Claire provides birthday party entertainment at a country pile, she realises that someone has recently been killed there, and she and Sophie team up with a depressed ex-copper and his blue-haired nibling to find out whodunnit. It's a while before the mystery element of the book is properly up and running, but the interaction between inept-but-dogged millennial Claire and eternal teenager Sophie – whose death remains a mystery – offers plenty of spooky fun. More, please.

**Children of the Sun**
*Beth Lewis*
HODDER & STOUGHTON, £18.99

Set in 1982, Beth Lewis's fourth book is a cult novel with a difference. Living off-grid, deep in America's Adirondack Mountains, the members of the Atlas community, all of whom have lost loved ones, are preparing for the opening of the Golden Door, which they believe will deliver them to a parallel reality in which the tragedies did not happen. Three not entirely reliable narrators – journalist James, trying to maintain professional distance even as grief for his dead lover draws him in; Root, one of a handful of children being prepared for a special role in the ceremony; and Eve, who is on a quest to find cult leader Sol – pass the narrative baton between them. An intriguing mystery with a wholly unexpected ending.




**Now You See Us**
*Balli Kaur Jaswal*
HARPERCOLLINS, £14.99

Balli Kaur Jaswal's fifth novel is a satisfying character-led mystery set in Singapore, among the Filipina maids who toil for long hours in rich households in order to send money home. Workers Corazon, Donita and Angel are friends who share tales of their treatment – the punishments meted out to Donita by her never-satisfied "ma'am"; the unwanted attentions of Angel's employers' son. Things get a lot worse when Donita's friend Flordeliza is accused of murdering her employer. The police department isn't prepared to look beyond the obvious suspect; for safety's sake, the three women ought to keep quiet, but they decide to mount their own investigation. A sympathetic and sobering examination of the hidden lives of an exploited and vulnerable group of people.

THE BOOKS OF MY LIFE

# Jessie Burton

## The novelist on being chilled by Du Maurier, loving Roald Dahl, and her debt to Hilary Mantel



**My earliest reading memory**
Dad would read Winnie-the-Pooh to me, doing all the voices. He did a particularly excellent Rabbit.

**My favourite book growing up**
I was 11 when I found A Traveller in Time by Alison Uttley in my new school library. Published in 1939, it tells the story of Penelope, a dreamer who can move between the centuries, becoming enfolded in a plot to save Mary, Queen of Scots. To a girl in 90s south-west London, Uttley made it seem absolutely plausible that if I opened my mind enough, I might pass through the barriers of the present and live among ghosts.

**The book that changed me as a teenager**
Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier. I would have been about 13. God, what a wild, weird story it is – and most of it went over my head. I distinctly remember the chill of Mrs Danvers, and it felt like the first proper grown-up book I'd read.

**The writer who changed my mind**
I often struggled with biography, but Claire Tomalin's Mrs Jordan's Profession, about the Georgian-era actor, Dora Jordan, was a revelation to me. Tomalin conjured this woman's life and times so vividly and generously. I went on to devour her dissections and reassemblings of Charles Dickens, Samuel Pepys, Katherine Mansfield and, my favourite, Jane Austen.

**The books that made me want to be a writer**
Most of Roald Dahl's books made me want to write. He made it seem easy, to a child, and very fun. Matilda, Charlie, Fantastic Mr Fox, Danny – the stories he wrote felt more real to me than life.

**The author I came back to**
Rachel Cusk. In my late 30s, when I was wondering whether I would become a mother, I tried and failed to read A Life's Work. Once I *was* a mother, I read it in the dark in the small hours, feeding my son. It's the most truthful, helpful and loving book about the madness and wonder of early motherhood.

**The book I reread**
Siri Hustvedt's What I Loved. This is such a beautiful novel, about family, art, love, loss, grief, damage and renewal.

**The book I could never read again**
My Phantoms by Gwendoline Riley. An exceptional book, written by someone able to peel back the layers of human behaviour and show the truth beneath. Her understanding of how pathetic so many of our interactions seemed so raw; I felt as if I'd been flayed alive by the final page.

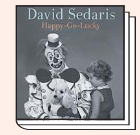
**The book I am currently reading**
Amy Key's Arrangements in Blue, an intimate memoir about building a beautiful life without prioritising romantic love, or focusing on received ideas of success.

**My comfort read**
Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel. The voice of a master: her detail, her humour, the beauty, the love of language. This book is talismanic to me, and it inspired me to keep going with the drafts of my debut, The Miniaturist. When I am anxious or sad, I reach for it. Not just because it's a good story, but because it is a piece of work so suffused with love, dedication and self-knowledge. I owe Hilary Mantel a great debt.

*Medusa by Jessie Burton is published by Bloomsbury.*

## Audiobook of the week

**Happy-Go-Lucky**
*David Sedaris*
HACHETTE AUDIO, 7HR 30MIN




There's a reason why David Sedaris has his own Radio 4 series and sells out Carnegie Hall in New York: as a performer of his own prose he's unmatched. Which is to say, the best way to enjoy Sedaris's waspish and funny essay collection is to hear it read by its author.

Sedaris devotees will be familiar with the family members who inhabit his stories, each portrayed in all their flawed glory. There is his bellicose father, who died in 2021, and who is recalled here in the essay Father Time. Visiting him one day, Sedaris finds him bleeding after his eponymous grandfather clock has fallen on him. "When you're 95 and Father Time literally knocks you to the ground, don't you think he's maybe trying to tell you something?" Sedaris wonders.

There's his sister Gretchen, who idly Googles Sedaris and tells him "A lot of people can't stand you"; and Hugh, his temperamental partner, whom he sees through his siblings' eyes on holiday after he reprimands them for feeding candy to the ants. "Don't listen to Hugh," Gretchen tells her brother. "He doesn't know shit about being an ant."

Sedaris delivers all this with impeccable comic timing. There are moments of pathos, too, such as when he finds Hugh sobbing after their house is damaged by a hurricane, reminding him of his homes in Beirut and Kinshasa that were destroyed. Real love, Sedaris notes, is when "you realise you'd give anything to make that other person stop hurting, if only so he can tear your head off again".
*Fiona Sturges*

## Tom Gauld




## Further listening

**The God Desire**
*David Baddiel*
WILLIAM COLLINS, 2HR 1MIN
The comic and author of Jews Don't Count reads his passionate yet sympathetic polemic in which he argues against the existence of God.

**Yinka, Where Is Your Huzband?**
*Lizzie Damilola Blackburn*
PENGUIN AUDIO, 11HR 18MIN
Ronke Adékoluejo narrates this entertaining tale of 31-year-old Yinka, whose mother and aunties "are praying over her love life as if [she's] terminally ill".

LARA DOWNIE

As more couples rip up the rulebook, the nature of marriage is dramatically changing – and art reflects that change. *Naoise Dolan* on the books that celebrate a new kind of happy ever after

# Reader, I lived with him



Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen in Pride and Prejudice

COLLECTION CHRISTOPHEL/ALAMY

In January, I attended my first ever wedding. Later, I mentioned the event in passing at my publisher's office. "Wait," someone said. "You wrote a whole book about a wedding before you'd been to one?"

At that stage I had signed off on the final proofs of my second novel, The Happy Couple. Matrimony structures the plot; the first chapter opens with the couple getting engaged, and we follow them as the ceremony draws near. Why choose this setup when I'd never attended a wedding? Because I thought it would make a good book. To me, marriage is like extreme sports: I'm thrilled for those who partake, and have zero interest in joining them.

Marriage is a nifty narrative device. It brings together people who don't normally meet, and occasions heaps of conflict. Also, it's accessible. Everyone knows at least the basics of how their culture gets hitched. We acquire this familiarity as much from art as from life. That's how I could write a novel about a wedding without ever having been to one. I researched some of the finer points, but I was largely able to rely on the knowledge I've absorbed from decades of media immersion, from books and poems, from paintings and song lyrics and movies.

What will become of the marriage plot in art and literature as the actual marriage rate declines? It's a question we've been asking for decades; Jeffrey Eugenides's 2011 novel The Marriage Plot offers a postmodern spin on the issue. Its heroine, reading English at Brown University, has to choose between two different men while studying virtuoso marriage plotters Jane Austen and George Eliot.

Marriage rates have since plunged even lower. That young people are tying fewer knots has triggered angst in certain quarters, though it's hardly surprising. It's hard enough these days for most young couples to rent a flat, never mind spend hundreds of pounds on a cake. But the real conservative bugbear isn't that fewer people can afford to get married; it's that fewer people actually want to. That fewer people are entering long-term romantic relationships, or seeking public validation when they do commit. That fewer people are judging themselves against traditional measures of success, or longing for a nuclear family.

For the avoidance of doubt, I'm not suggesting that couples who marry can't think for themselves. Actually, marriage nowadays is a much more active and informed choice than it was a few decades ago, precisely because it's no longer the default. Those with personal, specific reasons are still getting married – people like my newlywed friends. But the number of people who marry in order to conform is dropping off.

It follows that the traditional marriage plot will change in art as it has in life. The popular idea is that 19th-century female novelists romanticised marriage – Eliot, the Brontë sisters, and, above all, Austen. A "Jane Austen ending" is supposedly a happily-ever-after. But when we look at post-wedding life in Austen's novels, the success rate of marriage seems mixed at best. Besides a handful of exceptions (the Westons in Emma, say, or the Crofts in Persuasion), most spouses are either bickering or dead. Yes, we're generally told in the final chapter that the heroine's post-nuptial happiness will last – but Austen's love of irony warns that we shouldn't necessarily take the narrator's conclusion at face value.

In 20th-century anglophone literature, the theme of marriage still dominates – but rather than the events leading up to a wedding, we're more likely to see what happens next. Marital (and extramarital) relations lie at the heart of James Joyce's Ulysses, DH Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover, Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway and the work of Toni Morrison, a committed Janeite who devoured Austen's novels throughout her childhood. While not predominately concerned with marriage, Morrison's novels nevertheless present a similarly nuanced portrayal of the institution. As with Austen, there's the good (marriage as an exercise of agency between enslaved people in Beloved), the bad (Mavis's abusive husband in Paradise), and the ugly (literally all the couples in Song of Solomon).

Then there are the groundbreaking portrayals of same-sex relationships, with all their realistic flaws, in the work of authors such as James Baldwin, Djuna Barnes and Jane Bowles. While such depictions still don't dominate mainstream art, they've certainly become more accessible in the 21st century. Brandon Taylor's second novel, The Late Americans, centres on a gay friendship group where no single character must "represent" their entire community; the tension in Douglas Stuart's Young Mungo and Shehan Karunatilaka's The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida comes as much from community strife as from forbidden love between two men.

**When we look at post-wedding life in Austen's novels, the success rate of marriage seems mixed at best**

From the UK publication of Kristen Arnett's novel With Teeth to Todd Field's film Tár, starring Cate Blanchett, 2022 was a year of believable, therefore-sometimes-disastrous same-sex marriages. Meanwhile Akwaeke Emezi's novels and Liv Little's recent debut Rosewater take the beauty of queer love as their undisputed thematic core.

So where does all this leave the marriage plot? Well, it depends on the author. One can still write a convincing novel with wedlock at the centre: Monica Ali did so excellently in Love Marriage. But this testifies more to Ali's dramatic talents than to the contemporary importance of marriage. Show a character caring about something, and the audience will care, too – whether it's a birthday party, a frisbee contest, or a wedding. Novelists will probably always be able to persuade us that marriage is important to their characters. But they'll have to do the work. They can no longer rely on the reader bringing that assumption to the page.

I did not write my second novel about marriage with a rabid desire to tear the whole thing down. I am not aiming to inspire a wave of divorces, though of course I'll take it as a compliment if I do. But I did want to approach my fictional wedding with non-judgmental curiosity, tailoring the plot to the characters' peculiarities rather than forcing a ready-to-wear outcome. I considered what made sense for my protagonists, what they'd want, how they'd behave. Once I'd worked all that out, the rest was just typing.

That's what I want for real people, too: an awareness of what's right for them, and the resources to bring it about. Marriage can only benefit from continuing to become less of an obligation and more of a choice. Romance itself need not be a prerequisite for personal fulfilment; we were all, in my view, put on this planet to do whatever the hell we want. The more willing we become in real life to accept unconventional happy endings, the more emboldened novelists will feel to bring them to the page.

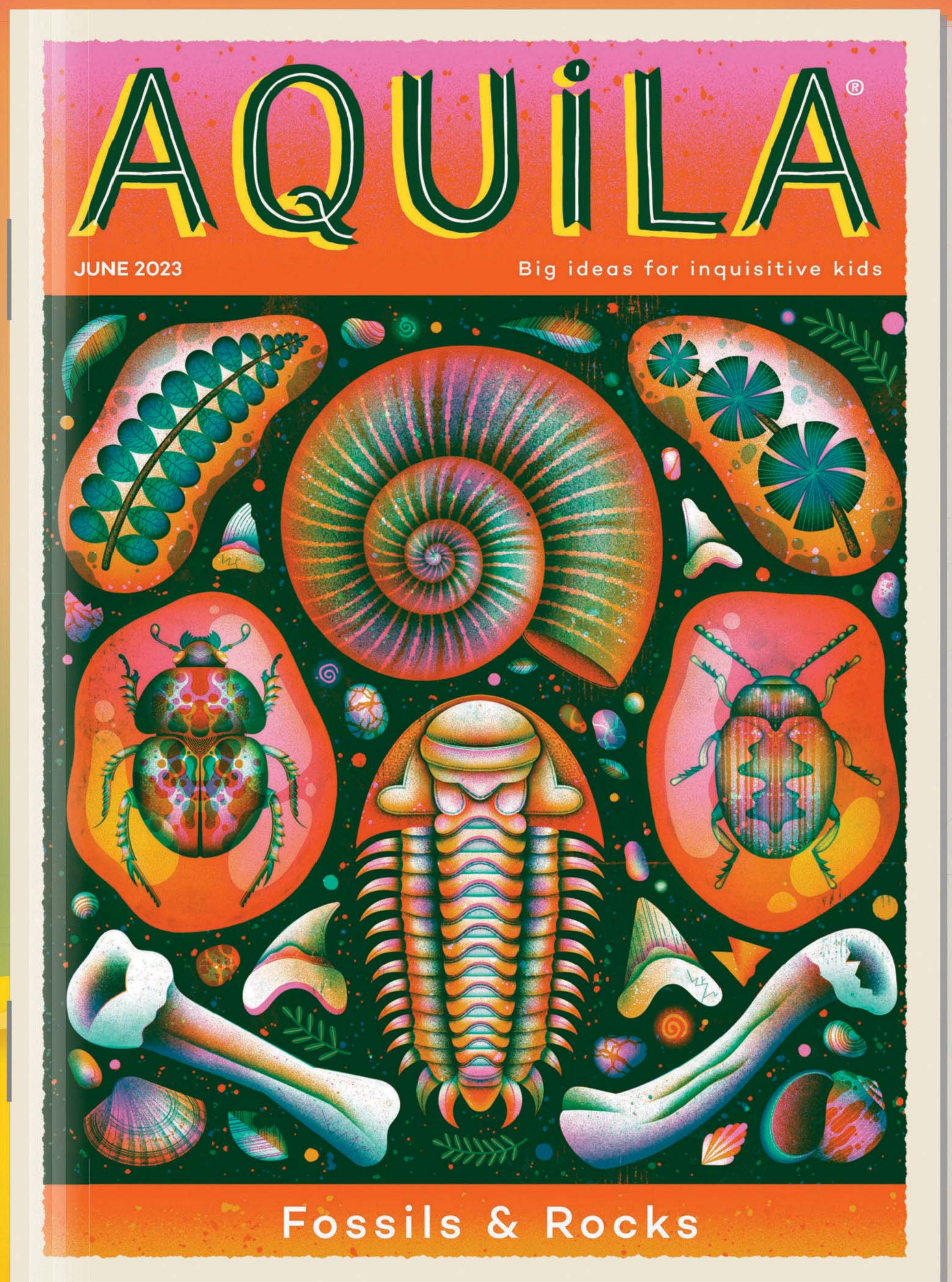
*The Happy Couple by Naoise Dolan is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.*

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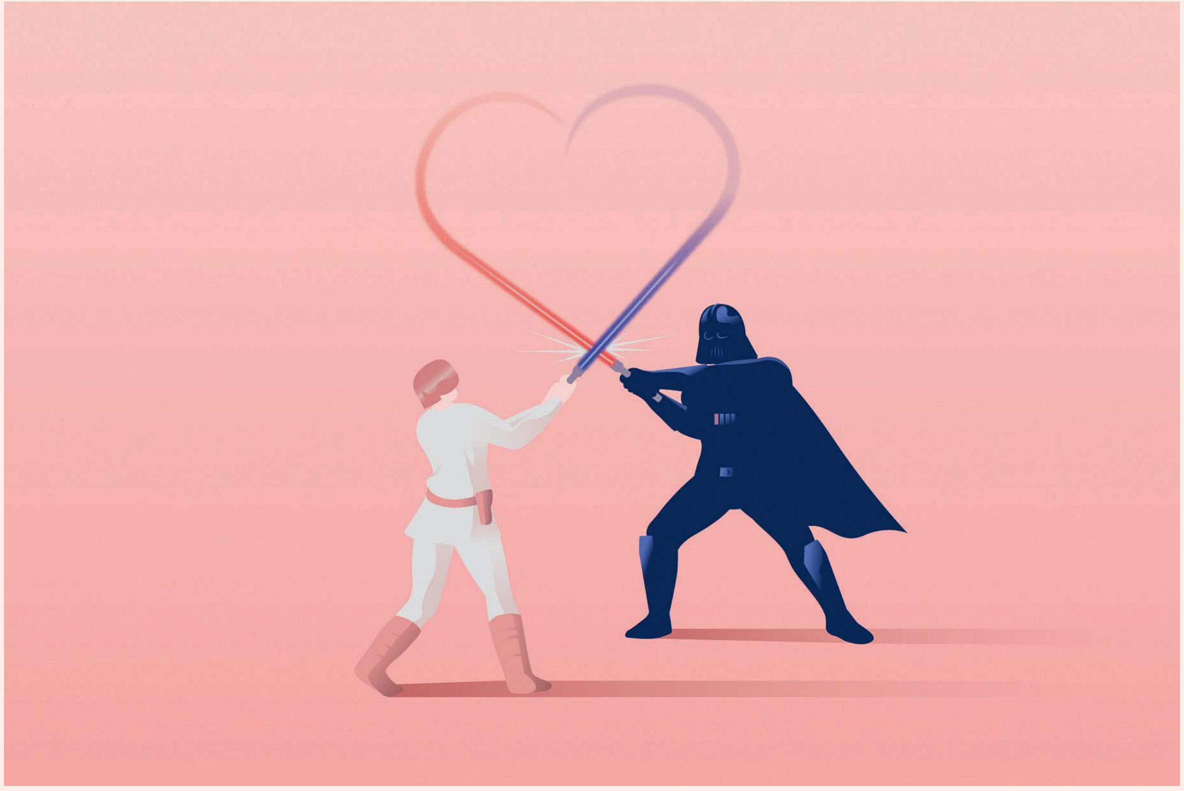
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THE BIG IDEA

# Why you should embrace your inner fan

## Far from being the preserve of weirdos, fandoms offer a model of community and wellbeing, says *Michael Bond*

OF THE MANY FILMS that dramatise the deranged behaviour of celebrity fans, one of the most popular is Der Fan, a German production from 1982 about a teenage girl obsessed with a pop singer. It begins predictably enough – she writes him dozens of letters – but the ending is a little less orthodox. When he doesn't reply she intercepts him outside one of his gigs, hangs out in his dressing room, has sex with him, kills him with a statue, chops him up and puts the dismembered body parts in a freezer. Unsurprisingly, it has become a cult classic.

Like most works of its genre, Der Fan taps into a stereotype that fans have had to endure since the emergence of popular culture. Characterised as hysterics, fantasists, psychopaths, geeks, misfits or mindless consumers, they are feared either as obsessive loners who spend their lives fretting in their bedrooms (like the protagonists of most fan movies) or as members of a frenzied mob (screaming teenagers at a Harry Styles gig). The word is still associated with "fanatic" in the public consciousness. We assume that anyone with a consuming interest in a celebrity or fictional universe is this way inclined (unless they are a sports fan, in which case their behaviour is likely to be applauded).

Psychological studies of fans tell a very different story from this narrative of folly. While every fandom has its extreme fringes, in the vast majority of cases, being a fan – and particularly being part of a fandom – appears to have a remarkably positive influence on people's lives. Gayle Stever, who has been studying the psychology of celebrity for more than three decades and has interviewed thousands of fans about their passions, says she has largely found them to be "normal people carrying on normal lives", who view their relationship with their idol as similar to an important friendship or a special hobby. Throughout the course of her career she has met "maybe 15" fans who were unwell (these include one who used extensive cosmetic surgery to make himself look like Michael Jackson).

It is hardly surprising that fandoms have a normalising effect on behaviour, for they fulfil an ancient human imperative: the need to be part of a group. The groups we belong to – family, friends, neighbours, colleagues – are an essential part of who we are. They give us companionship, purpose and a sense of security, and allow us to do things we wouldn't do on our own. Fandoms are social groups like any other. They connect us with people who share our interests, and they give us the courage to follow our convictions. It's safe to be different, weird or nerdy with your fellow fans as you're all in it together. Studies have found a "psychological dividend" for mental wellbeing and self-esteem among fans of Star Trek, Star Wars, Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes, Dr Who and One Direction. The fact that many know each other exclusively online doesn't seem to diminish the strength of their bonds.

Psychologists refer to this group effect as the "social cure". It is not the only way people benefit from fan culture. For many, their idol becomes a role model, someone they seek to emulate or who represents an attitude or way of being that might previously have seemed closed to them. Often we are drawn to people whose experience or outlook reflects our own. Taylor Swift's millions of young fans love her for her music but also for her awareness of the things that matter to them, and because her lyrics about heartache and angst mirror their own trauma. They don't know her, but her songs make it clear that she knows them.

The screenwriter Jane Goldman, whose credits include X-Men: First Class and Kick-Ass, told me about her teenage fascination with Boy George. She was a fan, she said, partly because of his music but also because his androgynous appearance and uniquely flamboyant style made her believe she could achieve something in life other than what was expected of her. "I saw in him this possibility of going out and living slightly outside of what society tells you to do," she said. "I remember the first time I saw him on Top of the Pops – it was like something clicked. I've spoken to a lot of people who have had the same experience. I felt like an outsider, I wasn't quite sure where I fitted in the world, and then I suddenly had a sense of belonging, like I had found my way."

Role models are no less powerful if they are fictional. Indeed, fictional heroes come with many advantages. They are readily available (you can always reread that book or rewatch that TV series). They have dependable personalities. And they come with a ready-made network of like-minded enthusiasts. As with real-life idols, fans tend to latch on to fictional characters whose values they admire. Harry Potter is adored by adolescents because he made it acceptable not to fit in, and because of his close circle of loyal friends. Many Star Wars fans find inspiration in the wisdom and ideals of the Jedi, the ancient order of protectors who learned to channel the light side of the Force through meditation and the control of negative emotions. Among Jane Austen fans, Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice is a standout model of courage and independent thinking because of how she defied the patriarchal norms of her era.

These dynamics of hope and transformation are hardly ever discussed in the public conversation about fans, yet they are a common thread, whether your interest is celebrities or classic literature, sci-fi or medieval history. Most fans are on a search for meaning, and they are prepared to give a great deal of themselves to find it. To be a fan means many things, but at its heart it is an act of love.

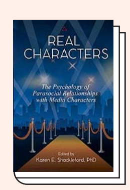
*Fans: A Journey Into the Psychology of Belonging by Michael Bond is published by Picador.*

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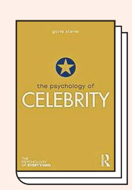



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# LIFESTYLE



## SUN, SAND AND SETTLING ARGUMENTS

*How to master the art of holidaying*

# Turn off your email, waste time, get the packing right – and never, ever play Monopoly. *Jess Cartner-Morley* sets out her pro tips for a happier, stress-free holiday, whoever you're with

*Photography: Franck Allais*
*Set design: Hattie Newman*

**Spend your money on space rather than travel**
"All mammals get aggressive when crowded," says clinical psychologist Linda Blair. "Save money on long-distance travel and invest instead in generously sized accommodation where you won't be on top of each other. Everyone needs a place to retreat to – it's how you keep stress levels down."

**Do not aim for perfection**
In the adverts, holidays are a magical montage of tinkling laughter and adorable children splashing in the water watched by Mum and Dad holding hands on twin sun loungers. In real life, all the loungers are taken by 7.30am and the kids are drenching everyone by dive-bombing in to the pool while you chase them with a bottle of sun lotion. But that's OK. The pressure to have a perfect holiday is a massive buzzkill.

Stuff goes wrong when you travel: trains are cancelled, someone gets an upset stomach, the tent leaks. Holidays are about spending time with people you care about, having new experiences and relishing life in all its authentic, messy glory. Don't sweat it.

**Know your audience**
Peace and isolation may be delicious to you but deathly dull to your kids. Granny might want to do the sights while you prefer kayaking. Or the other way around. The teenagers do not need to see the cathedral. It doesn't matter. It's their holiday, too. Ditto going On A Walk, although – pro tip – if you call it a hike they are more likely to be enthusiastic. Remember that teenagers have a different circadian rhythm and genuinely need lie-ins.

**Be honest: do you actually like beaches?**
Sandy beaches look so pretty in photographs, but a lot of people – me! – find sand super annoying. An inland spot with a pool or near a river or lake might suit you better, and be cheaper. Also, do you really want full-on summer heat or would somewhere more temperate, where you can walk and explore without fainting, be better? The point is to think about what you actually want rather than passively scrolling Instagram, where holidays always look amazing.

How active do you want to be? Are you a "high peak" or a "no valley" holiday person? A high-peak holiday is all about exciting activities; a "no valley" break has no "low" moments, and maximizes relaxation, fun and being pampered, even if there's little change from one day to the next.

**Do not buy sunglasses at the airport**
Nobody makes good retail choices in an airport, so this is not a good time to drop £150 on designer shades just because you are overexcited and also deranged from getting up at 5am. The only things you should buy in an airport are forgotten toiletries, snacks or a fragrance you already love. If the plane is delayed, buy a £3 crossword book and some crisps.

**Give yourself permission to waste time**
"Leisure can't be true leisure if you are constantly trying to make the most of it," says Oliver Burkeman, author of Four Thousand Weeks: Time and How to Use It. "We need to learn to waste time in order to enjoy it. The holiday has cost you money and time … but it can get strangely joyless if you fixate on trying to visit all the sights, or if you think of your holiday as being about resting in preparation for working hard when you get home."

For the first few days of a holiday, I am too restless to actually take it easy, so I pour my energy into doing recces of the area and local shops to stock up on wine and snacks until I wind down a bit.

**Clothes are the least important bit of packing**
"I had a magical holiday thanks to my perfectly colour-coordinated capsule wardrobe," said literally no one ever. Holiday dressing is my favourite kind, and I own way more kaftans and cute sandals than I could ever need, but clothes are the least impactful element of your suitcase when it comes to making a holiday go right.

Essentials are: Uno (the only card game everyone likes); aerosol-spray sunscreen that doesn't take 20 minutes to rub in; an extra phone charger and two more plug adapters than you think you need; headphone splitters so two children can watch on the same screen; an insulated water bottle that will keep your water cool; and a bug-bite zapper (the best fiver you will ever spend in Boots).

I have a friend who packs a portable wifi extender for Airbnbs with sketchy internet connection.

**Going as a couple? Don't brand it 'romantic'**
Spa treatments for two, honeymoon-y tables on the beach … Trying to be romantic all the time is likely to make you feel more self-conscious than sexy. Plan to have fun together instead of scheduling five days of staring into each other's eyes. Pick a location based on a shared interest. If you both love food, go



**‘Leisure can’t be true leisure if you are constantly trying to make the most of it’**

to San Sebastián and wander the old town sampling *pintxos*. If you first bonded over your love of Wes Anderson, take your half-frame cameras on a train journey in search of picturesque European cities.

If it's your first holiday together, somewhere new to both of you (definitely *not* somewhere either of you has been with an ex) is less loaded than somewhere one of you had a great time last year. It's sweet that your new boyfriend wants to teach you to surf, but spending two days coughing up seawater is not sexy.

### Don't get into a holiday rut

Military historians say generals tend to fight the previous war – and lose the next one as a result. If you are the holiday booker, you are the general, and a common trap is focusing too much on what went well and badly last summer and ending up with a holiday that would have been perfect a year ago. People can change a lot in a year – think about what you like doing now.

### Travelling with a little one? Take the buggy

A pre-dinner stroll around town might buy you a meal in peace while they nap. Also, a piece of blackout lining that you can drape over flimsy holiday-home curtains is worth it not to be up at 6am. If you have small children, travelling light is a mug's game.

### Manage the takeoff and landing

By this I mean the first and last days. Blair says that rather than planning to catch up sleep while on holiday, you should aim to nap more than usual in the days before you leave. The extra sleep can help to prevent frayed tempers when you do get away.

Burkeman advises planning to make your journey home as smooth as possible: "If you think carefully about how to handle the end point, your holiday is more likely to stay in your memory as wonderful."

Before you set off on holiday, figure out the journey home – so download the train timetable, print the boarding passes and put a pint of milk in the freezer.

### Download a group-spending app

Splitwise is a good one. You input what each person spends and it keeps a record, avoiding someone doing sums at the end of every dinner.

If some of you have kids and some don't, or some drink and some don't, or some are on a tighter budget, chat about how to split costs before the holiday – better that way than at the end of a dinner when someone ordered the lobster and everyone else is silently seething.

On a family holiday, don't overstretch yourselves financially then get frustrated with children for not being grateful. Children, bless them, are ungrateful little buggers by nature.



### Keep house visits short and sweet

An invitation to stay in someone else's house is hugely generous. Just be mindful that you will need to sing for your supper. It's not really on to ignore your hosts while you snog on the sofa or sleep all day. A lavish gift isn't important; bringing good vibes is. Smiles and positive energy will get you invited back sooner than a Diptyque candle.

### Do not have an argument to 'clear the air'

Your beloved can't follow Google Maps so you've taken a 40-minute detour to the restaurant, and now your new espadrilles are rubbing and you are starving. Irritation is the most easily accessible emotion, but take a breath and remember how much you love the person who is driving you insane.

Holiday rows have a habit of lingering in the memory. If one is rumbling, first, slow down on the alcohol. Talk about something else – anything else – for a bit. It takes about 20 minutes for strong emotions to dissipate, so chat about the menu and let the clouds pass over.

### Move email to the last page of your phone

Not seeing that little envelope icon every time you pull out your phone makes a huge difference to being able to switch off. Make sure the person feeding your cat etc knows to WhatsApp you instead of emailing, and then put on an out-of-office. Be consistent: if you have said you aren't going to respond to emails, don't pick up your phone and get involved in what is going on at the office.

### If you are renting a place, ask lots of questions

Not sure if it's done with a fisheye lens or witchcraft, but photos can be devilishly misleading. Ask as many tricky questions as possible, says Serena Cook, founder of Deliciously Sorted Ibiza. Is there shade around the pool? How big is the smallest bedroom? Is the garden overlooked? "They will tell you the good stuff, but you need to know the downsides too."

Try to establish contact with the property owner before your holiday. They're your best source of local recommendations, and a good rapport can make things smoother if anything goes wrong.

### Be lazy – except about exercise

Exercise works up an appetite for all that holiday eating, plus you'll feel better about yourself when you get home, plus it will install good associations with exercise, which means you are more likely to keep the good habits up. Also, everyone needs some me-time, and a run or swim is perfect for this.

### If I am reading by the pool, leave me alone

Try to divide up cooking, driving and childcare in a way that plays to everyone's strengths. I love to cook and am super happy to spend a chunk of the day planning, shopping for and making lunch. And hopefully there is someone who doesn't hate playing stupid ball games with kids, because if you disturb me when I'm having a lovely time with my new Curtis Sittenfeld novel, I may have to kill you. Field each player in his or her strongest position.

### Relax, delegate and let some things slide

Two weeks spent making beds and hanging up wet towels is not a holiday even if you are in a bikini. Let some things slide. Tell kids to rinse their swim things in the shower with them and hang them out. Leave the heavy-going books at home and pack what you will enjoy. Tilt your face to the sun when you drink your first coffee of the day; take a nap in the shade when it's hot.

### And never play Monopoly

Ever. Even if it's raining. Not unless you actively want to throw a hand grenade into the room ●



MATCHMAKING GUARDIAN READERS SINCE 2009

## ‘I banged my head on the table I was laughing so hard’

# Blind Date



COMPOSITE: ANDY HALL AND GRAEME ROBERTSON/THE GUARDIAN

### Sarah
*55, library assistant*

**What were you hoping for?**
An evening of good company, good food and good cocktails. Fortunately I got what I was hoping for.

**First impressions?**
Smartly dressed and smiley. I think he may have been a little nervous.

**What did you talk about?**
Music and dancing. The perils of dating when older. David Hockney. Children. Gardens. The fact we kept going off on different tangents …

**Most awkward moment?**
I didn’t feel there were any, even when he tried to strong-arm me into ordering the cod.

**Would you introduce Giles to your friends?**
I’d be happy to.

**Good table manners?**
Yes. Giles was the perfect gentleman.

**Describe Giles in three words.**
Chatty, fun, tipsy!

**Best thing about Giles?**
He asked questions and listened to the answers. He also said that he felt relaxed in my company.

**What do you think Giles made of you?**
I think he thought I was entertaining; there was a lot of laughing. And he really liked my pink coat.

**Did you go on somewhere?**
Yes, for another cocktail.

**And … did you kiss?**
I’d never kiss and tell.

**Marks out of 10?**
8.

**If you could change one thing about the evening what would it be?**
To have put on something warmer.

**Would you meet again?**
Yes, we talked about going to the David Hockney exhibition.

### Giles
*57, advocate and DJ*

**What were you hoping for?**
To acquire minor celebrity status, some DJ gigs and an appearance on Loose Women as a result of doing this.

**First impressions?**
Colourful, calm and confident. Warm, witty and wonderful.

**What did you talk about?**
Life, love, laughter. David Hockney. Harry Styles. The joy of dancing. Combining peanut butter with celery.

**Most awkward moment?**
Nearly getting run over by a bus. Well, this was my first date in rather a long time.

**Would you introduce Sarah to your friends?**
Yes. They would love her.

**Good table manners?**
Yes, she ate with a knife and fork.

**Describe Sarah in three words**
Brown eyed girl.

**Best thing about Sarah?**
She’s good looking, intelligent, funny, easygoing and has a joie de vivre.

**What do you think Sarah made of you?**
That I’m a bit like Phil in The Hangover?

**Did you go on somewhere?**
Bruno’s next door for (more) cocktails.

**And … did you kiss?**
We lingered slightly as we parted and kissed goodbye. On the *lips*!

**Marks out of 10?**
Sarah can’t be compressed into a number. She’s a librarian. OK, a 9.

**If you could change one thing about the evening what would it be?**
St John’s ambulance on hand for when I banged my head on the table I was laughing so hard.

**Would you meet again?**
Yes, we’re off clubbing and to immerse ourselves in David Hockney.

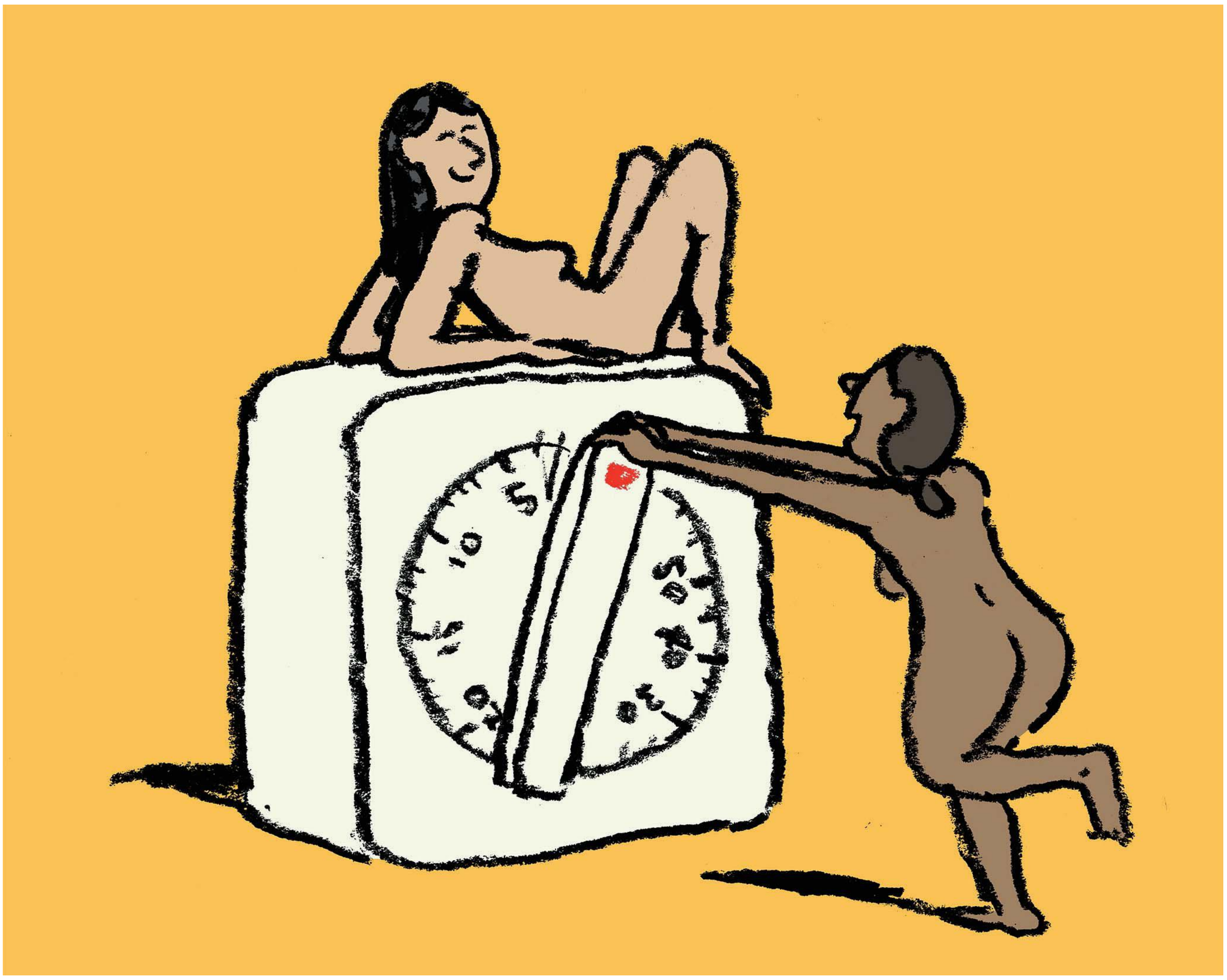
*Sarah and Giles ate at Caravel, London N1. Fancy a blind date? Email blind.date@theguardian.com*



TRUE STORIES OF OUR SEX LIVES

# This is how we do it

## *'She sets a timer on her phone and my job is just to enjoy what she's doing to me'*




**Stella, 31**

I've never found a sexual partner so attractive. When Satya gets naked I immediately feel weak. Soon after we started dating, I was sitting on her sofa after a night out and she put on a sexy, romantic song and gave me a really slow lapdance. She is an amazing dancer and held eye contact without laughing. I was really turned on, but I also felt very nerdy, like an undeserving teenage boy.

Feeling almost painfully desperate because you are so full of desire is a new experience for me and, unexpectedly, I love it.

In previous relationships I have been accused of wanting to have sex less than my partners, which is a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy because it's not a very sexy dynamic if your partner is always itching for it, and you're the mean one, always withholding.

Now often I feel the most turned on when I have to work for it a bit – when Satya doesn't initially want it as much as me and I have to seduce her.

Satya can find it difficult to orgasm, so we're working on that together. I get it, because I found it difficult for most of my 20s. For a long time I was convinced I was asexual. Partly that's because I hadn't realised I was a lesbian. When I had sex with boyfriends I suppose I got off on the mechanics of it, but I sometimes felt sickened by the closeness of it all. I often shut my eyes when they orgasmed because it gave me the ick.

Recently, Satya and I have started doing special exercises to try to make it easier for her to climax. I will set a timer for 20 minutes, and touch her, and I will stop when the timer goes off, no matter what. The point is to take the pressure off finishing, and concentrate on pleasure.

Most of the time we pencil in a session for the weekend because the thing about lesbian sex is it takes a while. You're taking it in turns, so you need an hour, absolute minimum. You can't have a quickie in the same way. If it's 11pm on a weeknight you can't get started: you'd be up all night! We like to give it a whole afternoon.

**Satya, 33**

I met Stella at a party and I remember noticing how self-possessed she was. She didn't know that many people there but she was entirely at ease. A year on, sometimes I'll look at her from across the room when we're out and be struck by that quality all over again. I'll watch her talking to someone and she'll be all composed and beautiful, and I'll think: I'm going home with you.

I'd had sex with one woman before I met Stella, but only had relationships with men. I find it difficult to orgasm with a partner, and I have tended to stop my exes concentrating on me in the bedroom because I worry I take too long. Stella won't stand for that.

She introduced this exercise where she sets a timer on her phone and my job is to just enjoy what she's doing to me. I know it's going to end so don't panic about her getting bored or tired, which are my main concerns and turn me off. She reminds me I should stop her if I don't like something and she will never be hurt or offended.

Another rule is her focusing on me, but I'm not allowed to make any sounds. That's helpful because I used to make the kind of noises I'd heard in porn, mostly to reassure my male partner that he was doing well (even though he often wasn't). One of the many wonderful things about being with a woman is they're not so convinced by the fake noises other women make in bed. I also really like that when Stella and I are having sex there's no procreation, there's just pleasure.

The knowledge that I'm attracted to women didn't strike me like a lightning bolt – it was a slow realisation. I go over it in my head a lot: how did this happen? Is everyone pansexual? Or are all women actually lesbians? Or is it just a random coincidence that I've fallen in love with Stella and she happens to be a woman? I think about how much I love her and how happy we are every day.

**As told to Kitty Drake**

*Would you and your partner like to share the story, anonymously, of your sex life? Email sexlives@theguardian.com with a brief outline of what you get up to in the bedroom*

*Illustration: Ryan Gillett*

# A birdsong app gives my wife more ways to prove me wrong



**Tim Dowling**
**On modern life**

My wife has an app on her phone that tells her the name of any plant she points the camera at. It's creepily accurate and deeply annoying, if occasionally handy. Even after 30 years in the UK, I only really know American plants.

"What is that, a hornbeam?" I say, indicating a tree along the path where we're walking the dog. My wife holds out her phone.

"It's an ash," she says. "Don't you know anything?"

"I know a hornbeam when I see one," I say, pointing at another tree.

"Beech," she says.

"Yeah, beech," I say. "And what about this hornbeam here?"

"You have no idea," she says, lifting her phone to eye level. "Actually, that is a hornbeam."

I'm no expert on British flora, but I know a little about odds.

Some weeks later I wake at 6.30am to see my wife standing at the open window, holding her phone out.

"What are you doing?" I say.

"Shh," she says.

I get out of bed. The sun is rising over a bank of cloud; the day promises to be warm. My wife shows me her phone. It says: Eurasian blackbird.

"It tells you the name of any bird," she says. "From the song."

My wife sticks her phone back out the window, and presses record. The phone says: goldfinch. I think: between this and the plant thing, she is going to be insufferable.

"What's the name of that app?" I say. "I'm going to get it for my phone."

"I'm not telling you," she says. "I don't want you copying my things."

"Getting an app because someone else has it isn't copying," I say. "It's marketing." Anyway, I tell her, disseminating unsolicited information in a scattershot fashion was my thing, long before the internet came along and made it everyone's thing.

"So really, you're copying me," I say.

"Sadly, you've gone mad," she says.

"And I don't need the name," I say. "I can find it myself."

This proves to be a little optimistic. I can't even find the App Store on my phone; I must have accidentally deleted the little icon at some point.

That afternoon I sit outside, looking at birds and trying to associate each with a particular aspect of the general racket. After a few minutes I think: this isn't really who I am. A robin lands on the handle of a garden fork, and issues a short trill.

"I mean, it's not *that* distinctive, is it?" I say. "Even another robin would have trouble with it."

The cat glances up at me from beneath the seat of a folding chair, with a look that says: shut up. Across the garden my wife leans out the back door, phone held at arm's length.

A week after that we are having lunch with friends, and my wife is again showing off about birdsong.

"That's a wren," she says, looking at her screen. "It's just amazing."

"I've invented an app called Cheesefinder," I say. "You just point it at a cheese selection and it tells you what each cheese is."

"Did you want some more cheese?" our friend Bel says, pushing the selection my way.

"He's just jealous of my bird thing," my wife says.

"We're having a bit of trouble with the prototype," I say. "At the moment it thinks everything is gouda."

"He doesn't like it when he can't copy me," she says.

"I can get your app whenever I want," I say, producing my phone.

"No you can't," she says. "He can't even find the App Store." I shoot my wife a look that says: not here.

"What do you mean?" says our friend Andrew, who works in IT.

"He doesn't know how to work his phone," my wife says.

"How do you download the App Store app without the App Store?" I shout. Andrew maintains a neutral expression, but I sense his opinion of me being revised in real time.

"Just search for App Store on your phone," he says.

"Search?" I say.

"Scroll up," he says.

"That's the torch," I say.

"You've scrolled down," he says.

I eventually retrieve the App Store icon and download the bird app.

"So which package do I need?" I say. "Western European birds, yeah?"

"I'm not helping you," my wife says. As I stare down at the screen, phone pointed toward the nearest window, I can feel myself losing interest already.

*I sit outside, looking at birds and trying to associate each with a particular aspect of the general racket*

## Edith Pritchett On millennial life



# You be the judge
# Should my girlfriend stop monitoring me at the gym?

*Interviews: Georgina Lawton*



## The prosecution
### Janae
*Nothing I do at the gym is good enough for my fitness-fanatic girlfriend*

My girlfriend, Jenny, and I go to the gym together, and she's constantly judging me while I'm working out. She moans at me and says: "All you do is go on your phone." But I'm doing light exercises and chill workouts, whereas she goes hard every time with her high-interval training.

I'm not sure what her problem is; it's not like I'm making her run slower by being on my phone. She often has a go at me and questions why I go with her. I say: "At least I'm bloody here."

We go five times a week, though if it was up to me I'd probably only go twice. I don't push hard every time, but I think that's normal – and I can't believe that me going five times a week isn't good enough for Jenny. She makes out that I'm lazy.

Guys, including bodybuilders, come up to me in the gym and say:"Your girlfriend motivates me to go harder." She loves that. Sometimes I try to join in with Jenny's hardcore workouts, but she never praises me when I do. When I work out in a more chilled way, or I'm on my phone, she'll come over and drop a snarky one-liner like, "Ha! Classic!", then walk off. I find that triggering and we've had fights in the gym before. I hate it when she comes up behind me and watches what I'm doing on my phone, before making a comment. It's like she's spying. The gym should be a place for me to unwind, too.

Jenny prioritises the gym over everything. We've been together for a year and she's always been like this. She will wake up early, do yoga, go for a run, then go to the gym. It's unreal.

She wants a fitness-fanatic girlfriend, and I feel inadequate next to her at times. I'll suggest going to grab a coffee or meeting people in the pub and she'll make excuses, like "I don't feel well." I'll reply: "Oh, so no gym then?" But she'll still go. She needs to change tack or I'll stop going.

Illustration: Joren Joshua

## The defence

## Jenny

*I like to be in and out in an hour, but Janae wastes so much time*

I love going to the gym, but since I've been with Janae I've made sacrifices when it comes to how I work out. The gym is my happy place, somewhere I can just put headphones in and be stress-free. Working out makes me feel better about myself.

Janae also goes to the gym, but not in the same way as me. She comes to the gym to gossip with her friends, or waste time watching videos on her phone. I used to go to the gym at 7am, but Janae wants to go in the middle of the day or late at night. I prefer to get my exercise out of the way, and to relax in the evenings. Janae prefers to wake up late, have a coffee and go to the gym at 2pm. I think that is wasting the whole day, but I'm in a relationship with her so I compromise.

Sometimes, before we head out, Janae will say she doesn't want to go, and I have to motivate her into getting there. I find that annoying. And when we get to the gym, Janae is often on her phone the whole time. I'll offer to work out with her, but she'll say she wants to do her own thing. But I'll look over later and she's not doing much.

I like to be in and out of the gym in an hour, but Janae wants to stay for two hours. I'll be ready to leave and she'll say: "Oh, can we stay longer, I haven't worked out that much."

I'll say: "Of course you haven't, that's because you've been scrolling on your phone." It's not just me who thinks that Janae's behaviour is ridiculous. She is known for wasting time. The personal trainers at the gym recognise us and often come over and ask: "Are you actually going to do anything today?"

Janae needs to get serious when she's with me. We are both fit, healthy and toned. I am slightly obsessed with the gym – I just think that if you're there you may as well be fully there and workout, rather than doing nothing. Why waste your time?

## The jury

*of Guardian readers*

**Should Jenny leave Janae to her own workout routine?**

*Reading between the lines, I suspect Jenny has some deep-rooted insecurities that get triggered whenever she sees Janae going at a different pace. Insinuating that Janae is lazy is unhelpful: why doesn't Jenny just go to the gym alone if it bothers her that much?*
**Tim, 41**

*Jenny is not guilty. The two of them have different approaches to the gym, so why not go separately? I understand they want to spend time with each other but it is making the experience less enjoyable for both of them.*
**Rachel, 37**

*It's one thing to go to the gym together, another to try to force your partner to work out the same way you do. Jenny talks about compromise, but it sounds more like she views it as a sacrifice. Maybe you should let each other just get on with it, or even not work out together at all. These kind of judgmental remarks never foster a healthy relationship.*
**Lou, 28**

*Jenny should go to the gym when it suits her and do her own workout rather than imposing her habits on Janae. If Jenny doesn't stop being so judgmental it will create further resentment and undermine their relationship.*
**Federico, 35**

*Jenny should stop making snide remarks. She has, however, made personal sacrifices so that they can go to the gym together. Janae is getting her endorphins from her phone, not from working out. So Janae should get off her phone or they should go separately.*
**Sam, 30**

THE VERDICT

| | |
|---|---|
| **Guilty** Jenny needs to take a breather | 3 |
| **Not guilty** Janae should up her gym game | 2 |

**You've heard the cases, now you decide …**
Scan to vote on this week's dispute, share your own, or be one of the jury

# I can't get past how empty I feel since my best friend died



## Ask Annalisa Barbieri

**Last summer, my best friend died. I couldn't fly to the US for his funeral. Mike (not his real name) was the brother I wish I'd had. We met when I lived in the States for three months. When I proposed to my future husband, I wanted Mike to be my best man. We used to go to the same church and when I realised that a celibate life as a gay Christian wasn't going to work, Mike was one of the few church friends who stuck by me.**

**I don't know how Mike died. He struggled with painkillers and alcohol, as well as his mental health. I've been in contact with his family but can't bring myself to ask the cause of death. I'm wondering whether I could ask – how to do so sensitively – to get closure. Is this appropriate?**

**I miss Mike all the time. I miss that he won't be at my wedding in July, that no one will hear his best man's speech and that we won't see him tear up the dancefloor with his dad moves.**

**I'm struggling because I no longer have a "best mate" to shoot the breeze with. It's not a space I expect my fiancé to fill; I think it's healthy for us to have our own friends to be authentic and share concerns with. Will I ever lose this sense of emptiness, or can I grow around this?**

I'm so sorry for your loss. To have a friend who accepts you for who you are is special. One of my closest friends died (of a drugs overdose) and I became obsessed with how she died. Looking back, I realise I felt that if I knew every detail, I could have gone back in time to prevent it. But I was also trying to get control of a situation that was totally out of my control, and I wonder if that is happening for you. Also, you are having to deal with this huge detail about your friend that you do not know.

I went to UKCP-registered psychotherapist John Cavanagh. He wondered if you might consider "imagining the sort of speech Mike would have written, maybe with help from his friends, writing it out and putting it in your pocket so it's close to you." Or you could write a letter to Mike telling him what he meant to you and keep that in a pocket. I used to pooh-pooh writing "letters that are never sent" but they can be cathartic.

You didn't say anything about your family. Cavanagh wondered how accepting they are of your sexuality and if Mike "represented an approving male figure you otherwise didn't have in your own family".

In terms of asking Mike's family about his death, Cavanagh advises that you "think about Mike the way you knew him and not let his battles define him. I would also think carefully about what you might expect the answer [how Mike died] to be. It may not match your expectations, and could cause more stress or more 'searching'." And I'd like to add: do not let the way he died define him.

But if you build a relationship with them, you may find it comes naturally to ask one day, though bear in mind that if they are religious and there is any perceived shame in the way he died, they may not want to share it.

Mike will always be part of your life. Grief is a massive emotion and can take years to process; it's early days but you will grow around it – I call it folding it into your life. I was told a wonderful analogy by a bereavement counsellor, which is that life is a glass and grief is a yellow ball. Sometimes the ball is so big it threatens to break the glass; sometimes it's so small you can hardly see it. The yellow ball never changes size, but the glass – life – does.

*If you would like advice on a personal matter, email ask.annalisa@theguardian.com. See guardian.com/letters-terms for terms and conditions*



# Daisy Jones & the Six is a blueprint for delicious holiday style



**Jess Cartner-Morley**
**On trends**

*Crochet is the ultimate breathable summer fabric, with built-in air con. Cut-off denim shorts are a stone-cold classic*

A rock'n'roll saga of love triangles, cocaine and tour buses might not sound of immediate relevance to your real-life summer holiday. Or hey, maybe it does – no judgment! Either way, if you haven't watched Daisy Jones & the Six, the Amazon Prime ten-parter, then I'm here to tell you that you really, really should.

Mainly you should watch it because it is just so much fun. Sexy, gripping, atmospheric, the sofa-viewing equivalent of a perfect sunlounger summer novel. (It is based on Taylor Jenkins Reid's perfect sunlounger read of the same name.) But specifically you should watch it for its wardrobe, because it is a blueprint for the most delicious summer-holiday style.

Daisy Jones & the Six is the story of a rock'n'roll band in 1970s California, by which I mean it is basically the story of Fleetwood Mac (the makers said they were partly inspired by the band). Guitar cases and whisky bottles and intimate love-hate duets sung up close and personal on stage in front of thousands. And the clothes – oh, the clothes! Breezy, floaty, semi-transparent blouses. Crochet vests and denim shorts. Faded T-shirts and cool fringed tapestry coats and skinny scarves. Finished with long tangled blond fringes and big dark glasses.

It is summer style bliss, and it translates surprisingly well to non-rock-star life. Floaty, semi-transparent Stevie Nicks-esque kimono-type garments with trailing sleeves look incredible backlit under stage lighting, but they are also genuinely practical to have on holiday. They take up no space in a suitcase, work as a beach cover up over a swimsuit and can be layered over a T-shirt and jeans at night to protect you from chills and bugs. Crochet is the ultimate breathable summer fabric, with built-in air con. Cut-off denim shorts are a stone-cold classic.

Riley Keough as singer Daisy Jones channels Nicks, with a side order of Joni Mitchell, in louche, ethereal layers and the kind of vintage-looking lace-edged button-through top that I comb every single market stall for every single time I go on holiday. Suki Waterhouse as keyboardist Karen (Christine McVie, with a bit of Patti Smith) makes a strong case for the fitted waistcoat as a summer vest. Camila Morrone as photographer Camila has an on-screen collection of loose maxi dresses that call to mind Ali MacGraw, alongside some Bianca Jagger-esque pale tailoring.

Theatrical? Well, yes, obviously, but I'm going to stick my neck out and say no more so than the Love Island look which has dominated recent summers. Those complicated swimsuits with crisscrossed straps that the girls wear in the villa – I wouldn't fancy my chances getting changed into one of those huddled under a towel on the beach. Corset tops? Not what I'm going to reach for when I'm supposed to be having a relaxing time, thank you very much. Tight dresses when it's hot, yuck. And as for belly button windows …

The Daisy Jones look, by contrast, is high-octane glam, but once you swap out the platform glitter boots for flat leather sandals, much of the female characters' fashion is loose and comfortable and practical. After all, it was invented by women who travelled the world and lived out of suitcases. The Daisy Jones look was also all over last month's Coachella festival: cowboy boots are hereby declared the new flower crowns, and fringed suede jackets have taken over from hoodies as the after-dark throw on.

Too often, summer fashion tries to divide women into two camps. Either you are a Bombshell in something tight and glittery that shows sideboob, or you are a sensible linen-wearing Mum in safe florals. But with a gauzy blouse, or a halterneck beach dress that grazes the sand, or a beaten-up denim jacket – you get a bit of romance, without looking too done. Guitar case optional. Jumping in the swimming pool? I'll leave that up to you.

MODEL: ANA AT BODY LONDON. HAIR AND MAKEUP: SOPHIE HIGGINSON USING OUI AND RHODE. CROCHET TOP: MONKI. JEANS: HUSH. SANDALS: IVYLEE. SUNGLASSES: BEYOND RETRO

*Photography: Tom J Johnson. Styling: Melanie Wilkinson*

# Lash fuel – a new breed of serums that give a boost on a budget





## Sali Hughes
## On beauty

This column on lash growth serums was planned for last month, but I had to delay it because a major TikTok craze caused my planned product picks to sell out.

Lash growth serums aren't new. But the way they're made is changing. Old-school versions mostly use the lipid prostaglandin, which has hormone-like effects. This essentially helps lashes grow for longer, artificially delaying their shedding cycle. Because these hung on to lashes way beyond their natural residency, it was not unusual to end up with the lash equivalent of needing a bloody good haircut. Ends were gnarly, a bit chewed looking, like slept-in falsies after a big night.

The newer peptide-based serums assist the natural growth process, conditioning lashes and providing silky, strengthened quality for only a fraction less quantity. And they're much gentler.

*My friend began using this eyelash serum on Saturday and by Wednesday her lashes were longer*

Teresa Smith, lash expert and founder of I Love Lash, says she's happier to recommend these to her post-chemo clients, as well as those who've "over-scrubbed their eyes, been subjected to botched lash extensions elsewhere, or simply seen their lashes thin out and become shorter with age".

If that's you – and you're able to get your hands on some – try Sweed Beauty's terrific **Eyelash Growth Serum**. It's applied in the same way as all others (by painting along the base of clean, dry upper lashes, as though applying liquid eyeliner, only before skincare), and the results can be so impressive as to be implausible – a friend began using it on Saturday and by Wednesday her lashes were noticeably longer. I get a slight tingle upon application of this one, but it soon passes. At £44 for 3ml it sounds expensive – and it is – but it's not in the same neighbourhood as the £100-plus hormone-charged serums of yore.

If you're already a Beauty Pie member (I am), then a lash serum is a good way to flex your discount. Beauty Pie's Korean-made **Lash Fuel**, £19.50, is well worth a punt. I experienced zero itch or irritation with this, and it leaves my lashes feeling soft and conditioned. You should begin to see the results in around four weeks, and the 5ml helping per tube will see you over the line.

If you're curious but not convinced, I recommend The Ordinary's **Multi-Peptide Lash and Brow Serum** for just £12.40, which doubles up as an aid to the over-plucked, feels as good as the others and has coaxed two of my friends' stunted lashes out of hiding.

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: BRUCE HORAK



## Anita Bhagwandas
## Trends on trial
### Creating the Kate Middleton 'blowout' using heated rollers

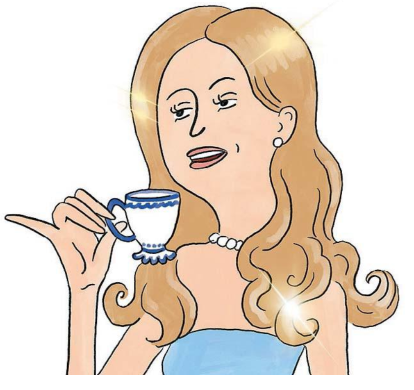
**The hack**
**Creating a fast, bouncy, blow-dry effect with heated rollers.**

**The test**
**Heated rollers have fallen out of fashion, and perhaps with good reason. It's hard to find a good set – they're fiddly to use, and with newer developments (see the Dyson Airwrap) and heatless hacks (see the bathroom belt or sock methods) we have other choices now. However, this method, coined by TikToker Shauna Rafferty, uses heated rollers a little differently.**

**Instead of starting with your hair down, then rolling each section and pinning it to your head, you put your hair in a high ponytail then divide the tail into sections, using a hot roller for each, and finish by pinning them to the crown. When they're cooled, Shauna undoes the ponytail to reveal Kate Middleton-esque curled ends that look like a professional blow-dry.**

**So I did exactly this, but having curly hair I also needed to blow dry it straight first. After following the method, my ends were indeed bouncy as I did the big reveal, but I could also get this look quicker using tongs.**

**The verdict**
**If you like this style, have straight, thick-ish hair and heated rollers to hand, then give it a go. A bigger issue for me and my fine non-caucasian hair is that this Sloaney bouncy blow-dry look was difficult enough to achieve first time round as a 00s trend. I have zero desire to try to fit that mould again.**



*Photography: Kellie French. Illustration: Edith Pritchett*




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# Lend your plants some support – they'll do better with something to lean on



**Claire Ratinon**
**On gardens**

This is a busy time on my veg patch. The spring crops are established and the summer ones are finding their feet.

The soft fruit plants – raspberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants – are starting to swell while the self-sown nasturtiums, calendula and poached egg plant are beginning to take up more space. Every day, a harvest awaits. Leaves of punchy rocket and oak-leafed lettuce leaves for a salad with dinner, and rhubarb stems shucked from their crown and stewed for dessert.

Putting in support structures for your plants is a pre-emptive act, a gesture made in the hope that your crops will flourish. So, since their growth is probably gathering pace, don't wait until your plants become unwieldy before giving them something to lean on as they grow. They'll be healthier for it plus it makes harvest easier.

For the climbing plants – beans, cucumbers, squash – structures or trellises made of willow, bamboo canes or hazel are simple to construct and sturdy. I favour the classic tripod – three (or four) sticks pushed into the ground and tied together at the top into a pyramid shape.

A similar structure can work for peas, but add netting or chicken wire, or weave twine around the structure for their more delicate tendrils to grab hold of. I once grew my climbing beans up a discarded rose arch I found and it was as beautiful as any clambering ornamental.

In the tomato bed, stakes can be pushed into the ground an inch away from the indeterminate tomato plants and tied loosely to their stems; they will thicken as they grow upwards.

*I once grew my beans up a discarded rose arch I found and it was as beautiful as any climbing ornamental*

Add more ties as the season progresses so plants can rely on the stake when they bear fruit.

One of my priorities is to encourage the surrounding ecosystem to thrive by welcoming all the buzzing, crawling, singing creatures to join me in the garden.

But another is to ensure there's a crop to pick – I use bird-proof netting to stop blackbirds eating all my soft fruit  as it ripens and to stop pigeons stripping brassicas of their leaves. Insect-proof mesh can be deployed to keep flea beetles from peppering brassicas with holes, but in my experience it's more effective at preventing carrot root fly from laying eggs and producing the larvae that feed on the roots.

Another horticultural material is shade netting. When growing in direct sun, especially in the heat of summer, lettuce plants have a tendency to bolt, rushing to produce flowers and seeds; this also makes the leaves less palatable. Shade netting can offer some protection and keep plants cropping for longer.

TERESA SWIFT/ALAMY; CONSERVATORYARCHIVES.CO.UK



## Gynelle Leon's Houseplant of the week
### Monkey tail cactus

**Why will I love it?**
*Cleistocactus colademononis* is a desert-native cactus and the closest you'll get to a plant pet: its long, thin stems are covered in soft white spines that resemble a monkey's tail and are soft enough to stroke.

**Light or shade?**
Bright, indirect light. But it can tolerate some direct light too.

**Where should I put it?**
Place it in a tall planter or hang it from the ceiling in your living room to show off its beauty.

**How do I keep it alive?**
This cactus prefers to be kept on the dry side, so allow the soil to dry out completely before watering. During the winter, it's best to water sparingly as the plant enters a period of dormancy. Use a well-draining cactus mix, as this will help prevent root rot. Feed monthly during the growing season (spring/summer) with a balanced, water-soluble fertiliser.

**Did you know …**
The monkey tail cactus can grow up to a metre long and produces small, bright red flowers in the spring. Its white spines are modified leaves that are designed to protect the plant from predators and to help it retain moisture in its arid environment. In Bolivia, its stems are used as a natural remedy for various ailments, including headaches, burns and rheumatism.



Guardian food writer Felicity Cloake feasts her eyes, bottom left, and eating fondue at Le Cellier in Les Deux Alpes

Discovering a fabulous place to eat can make a whole trip – so our local writers have scoured the continent to recommend the best bites

# 30 of our favourite European restaurants

*Introduction: Felicity Cloake*

Though I have a photograph of me standing on the Great Wall of China, my sole memory of the visit is the noodles I had for lunch in a truckers' cafe afterwards. Equally, while I know our student trip to Venice must have taken in St Mark's Square, two decades on I can only conjure an image of cuttlefish in ink as dark as a Tintoretto devoured in a hidden trattoria (startling to callow youths expecting pizza and pasta). Exploring the city's history through its cuisine – rice and spices from the east, salt cod from the frozen north and strudel from the years under Austrian rule – proved far more pleasurably educational than listening to my friend Rick read out endless pages of the guidebook.

And while I don't just travel to eat, it's always a reliable shortcut to intimacy with a culture. An interest in food means you'll never be short of something to talk about, even when you're eating alone.

As I was quietly finishing a bowl of cassoulet at Toulouse's Marché Victor Hugo, an older man at a neighbouring table enquired solicitously if I'd enjoyed it – "because I couldn't help but notice it looked a bit dry". A lively conversation followed, involving staff and other diners, and I left with several recommendations for further eating, and the pleasing sense of having been, ever so briefly, among friends.

Driving around Iceland a couple of years ago, I found it very easy to admire the scenery, but more difficult to engage with its few inhabitants, until I went for lunch at the Brimslóð Atelier guesthouse in Blönduós on the north coast. As chef Gísli Egill Hrafnsson deftly prepared the fish (local cod, naturally) in his kitchen overlooking the grey Greenland Sea, I was able to quiz him on important subjects not covered in the National Museum, such as, how do you get to sleep when it's light 24 hours a day, and what do you do if you happen across a stray polar bear?

It pays, of course, to look beyond the most obvious dining options. In the Croatian islands, my eye was caught by a ragged flyer fluttering near the ferry terminal, advertising dinners at a farm up in the hills, so I booked, attracted by the chance to see beyond the touristy coastal strip. Not only did we come away with a two-litre plastic bottle of their wine, but we got a lift from town in the back of a pick-up with a bouncy little terrier, which I enjoyed almost as much as the slow-braised octopus that followed.

Asking locals where they go out to eat also opens up neighbourhoods not normally on the visitor's radar. Forget the pub opposite the British Museum offering "London's best fish and chips"; Knight's Fish Bar in West Norwood, with its picture of a young Queen Elizabeth tacked to the wall above the saveloys and pickled eggs, is less than an hour away by bus – get a seat on the top deck and you get a cheap tour of south London to boot.

The memory of the food – and the special foodie places discovered – is often the highlight of a trip, what really connects us to a place. That competitive fondue eating with friends at Le Cellier in Les Deux Alpes, or the punchy little *noisette* (espresso with hot milk) at Trattoria des Pistoles in Marseille's maze-like Le Panier quarter are snippets in time I cherish.

So you can keep your fancy hotels – frankly, I'd always rather spend my money on food. Here our writers pick their favourite restaurants for creating those epicurean holiday memories.

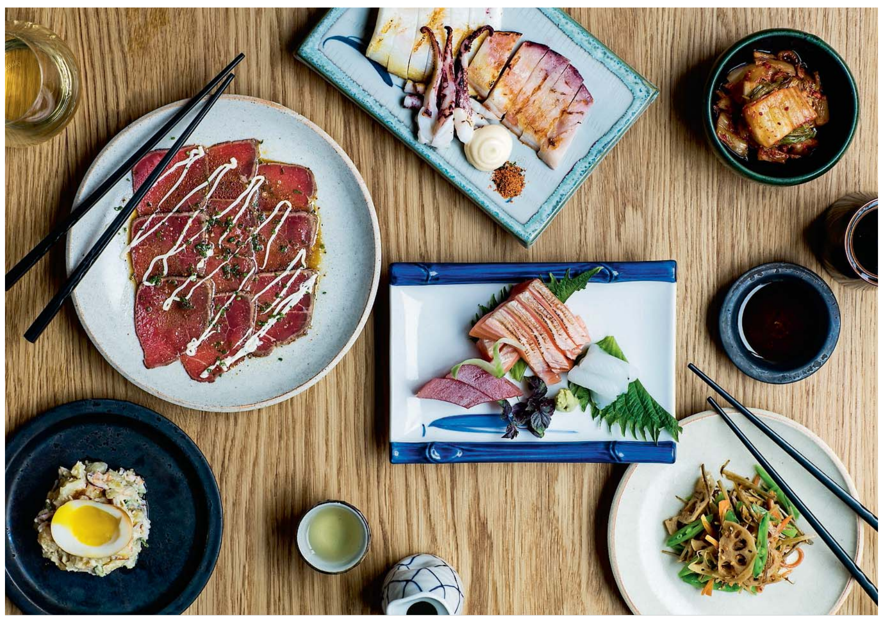


**'You can keep your fancy hotels, I'd always rather spend my money on food'**



RICHARD SAKER/THE GUARDIAN; COURTESY OF FELICITY CLOAKE


2


5

## Portugal

**1 Gadanha, Estremoz, Alentejo**
My pal, Portuguese chef Nuno Mendes (owner of London's Lisboeta), sent me to this great wee place years ago. He waxed lyrical about a puff pastry of partridge and a *sopa fria* – cold tomato soup dressed with strawberry, prawn and basil ice. This is a casual restaurant and shop, but the cooking is among some of the best in the Alentejo region. It's not fancy, but what it does, it does more than well. Standouts are fried croquettes of veal or lamb and the classic *peixinhos da horta* "little fish of the garden" – a tempura green bean.
*Mains from €14.50, merceariagadanha.pt*
**Audrey Gillan**

**2 Prado, Lisbon**
This light-filled restaurant in Lisbon's Chiado district will probably get a Michelin star – I reckon so anyway – so get in there first. Brilliant but super shy chef António Galapito, who worked with Nuno Mendes in London, has gone off the scale with his cooking on his return to Portugal. All the produce is as local as it can be, but cooked with a punky sensibility *and* deep skill. I come back every time I visit Lisbon and would eat everything on the menu.
*Mains from €9.50, pradorestaurante.com* **AG**

**3 Alameda, Faro, Algarve**
A love letter to the Algarve is the theme for Rui Sequeira's tasting menu at this funky restaurant in Faro's old town. Produce from the coast and the mountains is key to what Sequeira says is "an authentic ode to the gastronomic tradition of our region", with dishes that hark back to his childhood. I love that this is haute cuisine without the fuss or the wallet-busting prices. There are takes on traditional Algarve dishes, such as *cataplana* (pork and seafood stew) and piri piri chicken.
*Mains from €22.50, 10-course love letter to the Algarve menu €89, (vegetarian option available), restaurantealamedafaro.com* **AG**

**4 Almeja, Porto**
Everyone I've sent to this little restaurant adores it. It's stylish and warm, and the dishes do a dance between Portuguese classics and ones with a culinary twist, thanks to the ideas chef João Cura picked up while travelling in Asia with his wife Sofia, the restaurant manager. Main courses include the stalwart goatling oven rice, with giblets bringing an intensity of flavour, and an unforgettable dessert of sweet curry, coconut, mango and lime. The "10 moments" menu offers a taste of the best dishes and there's a great-value set lunch for €10.50, with bread, starter, main course and a soft drink.
*Mains from €18.50, 10 moments menu €80, (vegetarian option available), almejaporto.com* **AG**

## Denmark

**5 Jah Izakaya and Sake Bar, Copenhagen**
Japanese and Korean restaurants are taking over Copenhagen at the moment, fusing New Nordic philosophies with the food of east Asia. Opened in 2018, Jah Izakaya, on a street near the meatpacking district, is an unpretentious, fun and inviting Japanese-inspired gastropub. It serves *gyoza*, *tonkatsu*, Danish squid and a fabulous beef carpaccio that can be washed down with tankards of lager or bottles of sake, and is soundtracked with reggae.
*From about 210 kroner (£25) for three small plates, jahizakaya.dk*
**Laura Hall**


4

**6 Pomle Nakke, Horbelev**
Recommended to me by a Danish friend, this airy spot on a clifftop overlooking the Baltic was a traditional family-run restaurant that has been reworked into something more refined by the owners of the Danish chain Sticks'n'Sushi. About a 90-minute drive south of Copenhagen, it's in an untouristy region that is now coming into its own. After a morning on the fossil-strewn beaches nearby, a lunch of Danish oysters, locally caught scallops, cod and kimchi goes down well under the beech trees.
*Set four-course menu 495 kroner (£58), falsterskyst.com* **LH**

## Belgium

**7 De Gebrande Winning, Sint-Truiden, Flanders**
Far from the chic, gourmet dining scene of metropolitan Brussels, rural East Flanders offers fruit orchards, vineyards and craft breweries, which partly explains why the market town of Sint-Truiden has a cosy tavern that has become a shrine for lovers of beer and food. Chef Raf Stimorol is inspired by his grandmother's traditional recipes, using seasonal produce complemented by the beers that he cooks with: hearty dishes like pork braised in rich red-brown beer or North Sea turbot baked with fresh hop flowers. My choice is the beer pairing menu, though there are 600 labels on the brew list!
*Two-course lunch €27, four-course tasting menu €55, or €79 with beer pairing, degebrandewinning.be*
**John Brunton**

**8 De Zuidkant, Damme**
Damme is a village on a sleepy-seeming canal lined with windmills, which I discovered when travelling from Bruges to Knokke-Heist on the Belgian coast. It's renowned for its food, and the medieval high street is lined with bistros, but I always book a table at De Zuidkant, a relaxed diner (though it has a Michelin star). Chef Patrick van Hoorn, cooking in a tiny open kitchen, subtly combines local ingredients – such as smoked eel and white celery with foie gras or line-fished mackerel, swede and strong cheese.
*Four-course tasting menu €90, restaurantdezuidkant.be* **JB**

## The Netherlands

**9 De Dagvisser, The Hague**
The Netherlands isn't famed for its fine cuisine, but when


8


10

I moved to Scheveningen (near The Hague) more than a decade ago I was thrilled to find the seafood often excellent. One of my favourite early discoveries was De Dagvisser restaurant, next to where the fishing boats moor. If I'm on a budget, I'll stick to simple dishes like cod and chips, but pricier options include fresh oysters and mussels from Zeeland. After eating, the lovely beach is nearby for a digestive walk.
*Two-course Love of the Sea menu €21.50, dedagvisser.nl*
**Ben Coates**

**10 Pllek, Amsterdam**
A few years ago, the former shipbuilding area of Amsterdam, known as NDSM, was largely derelict. It has now been reinvented, with new bars and restaurants. I particularly like Pllek, which calls itself "the biggest green restaurant in Amsterdam" and is in a greenhouse-like building on the waterfront. On summer evenings, I'll take the free ferry over from the centre of town and order something from a menu that is eclectic and hearty, including fried cod salad, vegetable tajine and wild boar stew with gingerbread.
*Mains from €20.50, pllek.nl* **BC**


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## Germany

**11 Oh Panama, Berlin**
As the swish, art-filled interior suggests, this Berlin spot is not in thrall to tradition. The creation of entrepreneur Ludwig Cramer-Klett, it's a concept restaurant that draws inspiration from a 1970s German children's travel-themed book, the menu taking German cuisine on a journey to exotic places. Familiar ingredients such as Arctic char, saddle of lamb and goulash are remixed into a changing carousel of fusion dishes elevated by creative sauces and sides such as ember-roast potatoes, chicory with hazelnut, and fermented vegetables. Artworks are by Alicja Kwade, Kerim Seiler and Julius von Bismarck, and there are cocktails at the restaurant's Tiger Bar.
*Mains from €23, set menus from €65, oh-panama.com*
**Paul Sullivan**

**12 Obere Mühle, Bad Hindelang, Bavaria**
In a mountain setting in the Oberallgäu region, near the Austrian border, the "Upper Mill" is in a former saw mill and manages to be both rustic *and* refined. The restaurant (and guesthouse) opened in 1989 and has been the domain of head chef Oliver Egger ever since. Bavarian and German classics, with ingredients hunted in forests and plucked from gardens are traditional and elegant, much like the interior. Tasteful antiques mix with dilapidated walls and a mesmerising painted ceiling. Every dish is worth trying, but the three kinds of organic lamb: roast, oriental, and with creamy polenta (€34), are memorable. There's also a museum and organic cheese dairy on site.
*Mains from €19, set menu from €60, obere-muehle.de* **PS**

## Czech Republic

**13 La Fresca, Kroměříž, Zlín**
Kroměříž, a baroque castle town in the Zlín region, is a gem in the south-east of the country. Its main square, a cobbly quadrangle of pastel facades (pictured), is delightfully Czech, and is best viewed from the terrace of the town's flagship restaurant, La Fresca. The menu is big on traditional hunting plates, such as venison served with chanterelle mushrooms and fallow


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KROMĚŘÍŽ PHOTO: MILAN GONDA/ALAMY

deer leg in creamy sauce with a dollop of cranberry. The restaurant is also a swish-but-cosy hotel, so it can be just a short trudge from dining room to bed. *Mains from 230 koruna (about £9), lafresca.cz*
**Mark Pickering**

## Spain

**14 Aiyanna, Playa de Cala Nova, Ibiza**
Turquoise sea and wafting palms, sofas and laid-back tunes, beautiful people and food made of leaves and flowers and fish … if AI designed an ideal Ibiza lunch spot, it might be Aiyanna, on a fairly wild beach near Santa Eulalia. With a wide variety of greenery from their organic garden and sharp flavour pops, the food is fresh and healthy. Lunch might be artichoke flowers with feta and mint, or mussels in lemongrass, and a few mojito sorbets. Great location plus excellent food is never going to be a budget option on Ibiza, but with mains from about €20 this place is worth it. *aiyannaibiza.com*
**Sorrel Downer**

**15 Fuentelgato, Huerta del Marquesado, Castile-La Mancha**
On a foodie pilgrimage to Cuenca, Spain's Capital of Gastronomy for 2023, it's worth going the extra mile (well, about 40 miles through the rocks and pines of the Serranía de Cuenca) to this outpost of *alta gastronomía*. Young chefs Alejandro Paz and Olga García, both in their 20s, offer imaginative tasting menus in an old-fashioned family bar with seating for 12. Expect the unexpected: artichoke in game and coffee consommé, pigeon in garum sauce, aubergine ice-cream with chocolate, and milk ice-cream with caviar have all featured. This is special. Book ahead – and fight not to be the designated driver: there's a cellar of 400 wines you probably won't have heard of, and a long drive back. *Seven-course tasting menu from €50, restaurante.covermanager.com* **SD**

**16 Espacio Eslava, Seville**
I've never been less than deliriously happy here, sitting at an outside table with a view of the church, a chilled manzanilla to hand, working through creative and affordable tapas and *raciones* with friends. This place is an institution in the San Lorenzo district: the modern feel belies its 35 years, and it's the weekend venue of choice for ebullient *sevillanos*. There are ribs,


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*carrillada* (braised pork cheek) and beef tataki with ginger for meat-lovers, but the seafood dishes – razor clams in lemon, fried sea anemones and *boquerones* (anchovies) – are the star attraction.
*Tapas from €3, raciones from about €12, espacioeslava.com* **SD**

**17 Vista Alegre, Colunga, Asturias**
A table shaded by a white umbrella on the terrace of a laid-back, child-friendly restaurant above sandy La Griega beach and close to dinosaur stuff in the Jurassic Museum? Yes please. Add an ice-cold glass of cider and it doesn't matter what's on the menu, but the *chipirones fritos* (battered squid) seafood on the grill,


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paella, and fish straight from nets hauled into neighbouring Lastres are consistently good and fairly priced. In colder months, savour its award-winning *fabada* (pork and bean stew) in the elegant sea-view dining room. It's open for lunc h only until July.
*Mains from €16, restaurantevistaalegre.com* **SD**

## Ireland

**18 Casey's Baltimore Room, County Cork**
With its scrubbed timber flooring, nautical decor and ocean breezes, the Baltimore Room has a quarterdeck vibe that offers commanding views over Roaringwater Bay, which is home to the restaurant's own shellfish farm. Despite the pared-back, easygoing elegance inside, owners Dominic Casey and the family work hard to make sure their food is in season and fresh. Scallops are farmed early in the season, while summer brings mussels and prawns. Other offerings include sirloin steak, black sole, crab claws and a seafood tasting plate.

# Readers' travel tips
# Favourite restaurants

### Winning tip
**Perfect platters in Piedmont, Italy**
Nestled in the hills of Piedmont, south-east of Turin, is a family-run restaurant called Madonna della Neve. There is no menu. The *nonna* in the kitchen sends out succulent dishes on large platters. From melt-in-your-mouth carpaccio with salty parmesan flakes to courgette flowers filled with creamy ricotta, each dish is an absolute delight. The pièce de résistance is the butter and sage agnolotti.
**Rita Cunha**

**Lunch by the Danube, Vienna**
I lived in Vienna for five years and would regularly spend Saturday lunchtime at Das Bootshaus on the Alte Donau (Old Danube), which opens a deck on the river in summer. I'd have a delicious paella or a basket of fried calamari washed down with a cold beer or spritz, followed by a dip in the river. **Rosie**

**Croatian classic, Hvar**
On entering the small resort of Milna you'll spot a group of tables perched on a rocky outcrop right next to an idyllic, pine-shaded beach. Restaurant Milina, a three-generation family affair, is renowned for its bell-cooked dishes (under a clay or iron) with lamb or *gregada* (a fish and potato stew) among my all-time favourites. **Andreas Staab**

**Vegan magic, Porto**
Em Carne Viva is a truly magical place that offers exquisitely crafted food while being incredibly easy going – as if you're eating at a friend's house. Perhaps it's the setting – a wonderful family townhouse and garden. Perhaps it's the kitchen putting together food so exceptional you have to remind yourself it's vegan (delivered in 10 or five plate "moments" for €80 or €45 respectively). **Ben**

**Amazing risotto, Slovenia**
En route to nearby vineyards in Vipava, in the Carniola region of Slovenia, we came across Gostilna Podfarovz. A "light bite" became a five-course taster menu: cured meats, smoked salmon, beef tartare, the best barley risotto I've ever eaten. **Glesni Llwydd**

*To enter our readers' tips competition and see the terms and conditions, visit theguardian.com/readers-travel-tips (you must be a UK resident to enter). The week's best tip, chosen by Tom Hall of Lonely Planet, wins a £200 voucher to stay at a Coolstays property. This is a selection of tips: see more on our website*

An onsite micro-brewery keeps craft beer aficionados (and lesser species like me) happy with Sherkin Lass pale ale and Roaring Ruby dark red ale.
*Mains from €18, caseysofbaltimore.com*
**Vic O'Sullivan**

## France

**19 Au Vieux de la Vieille, Lille**
There's a particular kind of restaurant in northern France, the *estaminet*, that dates from the days when coal miners would gather for post-shift banter and beer. While the mines are long gone, the estaminets remain, and Au Vieux de la Vieille is one of the best in Lille. It offers a menu of local classics: beef carbonnade, made with beer and gingerbread; *potjevleesch* (four meats in aspic jelly - better than it sounds); and dishes using the local stinky cheese, maroilles. The decor is as much a part of the experience as the food, with dried hops, shelves of bric-a-brac and rustic wooden tables and chairs. Booking essential.
*Mains from €12.10, estaminetlille.fr*
**Carolyn Boyd**




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**20 Zéphirine, Bordeaux**
In a city known for its carnivorous tendencies, it's a joy to find a chef who is more in thrall to vegetables than beef. Chef Romain Corbière has worked in some of the best restaurants in France, but returned to Bordeaux to open a bijou restaurant, which he calls an *auberge urbaine*, with his sister Marie-Zéphirine and her husband, Bertrand Arnauld. The menu reflects the seasonal produce available at markets, with vegetarian or vegan options *de rigueur*, and all paired with superb regional wines.
*Three-course lunch from €31, dinner from €55, zephirine.fr* **CB**

**21 La Table d'Élise, Noirmoutier, Vendée**
For all the flavour and less of the frippery, seek out bistros owned by France's top chefs. The best I've found is La Table d'Élise, from Alexandre Couillon, who is passionate about the island on which he grew up. Noirmoutier, off France's west coast, is blessed with some of the best produce in the country. The menu includes fish landed that morning and vegetables that thrive in the seaweed-fertilised soil. With its wood panelling, fishing nets and ships' brass, the decor is charmingly olde worlde and its front window opens out towards the harbour.
*Mains from €18, alexandrecouillon.com* **CB**



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**22 Chez Mattin, Ciboure, Basque Country**
Across the harbour from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, one of my favourite food-loving towns, is the village of Ciboure. It's a warren of sleepy lanes and red or green timber-framed Basque villas. Chez Mattin is an institution in these parts, where chef Michel Niquet continues the family tradition and cooks fish caught that morning. The choice of dishes is announced to the dining room at the start of each course by Niquet's wife, Céline, and the signature dish is *Ttorro* (€30), a Basque fish stew with juicy langoustines.
*Mains from €21, chezmattin.fr* **CB**

## Greece

**23 To Psaraki, Santorini**
Produce from milky-white aubergines to peach-sweet cherry tomatoes flourish in Santorini's volcanic soil, but good food is not always easy to find on the island. Away from the tourist-heavy caldera area, To Psaraki is a clifftop taverna with a handful of check cloth-covered tables in Vlychada, on the island's southern tip. It may not have such spectacular views (although there are fine vistas of the tiny fishing port below), but chef Thanasis Sfougaris's brine-fresh seafood dishes (onion and herb-stuffed grilled sardines; cod fillets steamed in white wine and drizzled with a tangy caper sauce) more than make up for the lack of Insta fodder.
*Mains from €12, on Facebook*
**Heidi Fuller-Love**

**24 Stathmos, Zakynthos**
Few give this hole-in-the-wall taverna housed in what was once Zante town's bus station (*stathmos* means bus stop) a second glance, but for hearty portions of luscious home-cooked food served up with a big dose of island colour, it can't be beaten. Stathmos is justly famed for its *kouneli stifado* - chunks of rabbit marinated overnight in red wine vinegar, flash fried in olive oil and then slow-cooked in a garlicky tomato sauce. It's a popular spot with locals, so it's wise to arrive early and bag one of the wonky wooden tables overlooking the street.
*Mains from €10, Filita 42, tel +30 2695 024040* **HFL**

## Croatia

**25 Ante's Place, Mljet**
Of all of Croatia's islands, I love the mellow mood of Mljet - and it's at its friendliest at Ante's Place, a family-run



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restaurant overlooking Saplunara Bay on the island's eastern side. Ana and Ivo Dabelić are the cheerful hosts and cooks, specialising in freshly caught seafood and carrying on the tradition started by Ivo's father, Ante. With a bit of notice they also serve slow-cooked *ispod peke* - under a bell-shaped iron pot - and Ivo makes sublime lobster spaghetti. The setting is magical: the sheltered bay is right in front of you and I've seen some spectacular sunsets. They'll offer a free launch service for those arriving by boat.
*Mains from €29, pinetreemljet.com*
**Mary Novakovich**

## Poland

**26 Concordia Taste, Poznań**
At the end of my most recent visit to Concordia Taste, I was so smitten that I was tempted to "do the Poznań" - turn my back on the kitchen and bounce up and down, which is what the local football fans famously do when their team is playing a blinder. Here's why: the marinated walnuts. And the smoky potato soup. And the quince ice-cream with elderflower vinegar (trust me). And the truffle mayo with toadstool crisps. And the blueberry mustard. And the parsnip flan. And the truffle sauce that pimped up the venison. I'm frothing in remembrance! A bright and airy space with a Scandi-chic vibe make for a very memorable setup. I've heard on the grapevine that Poznań has aspirations of becoming the food capital of Poland. It's going the right way about it. *Smacznego!*
*Mains from 41 zloty (£8), two-course lunch 41 zloty, concordiataste.pl*
**Ben Aitken**


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27

## Italy

**27 La Marina, Ponza**
La Marina is built into the weathered volcanic terrain of Cala Feola, a natural harbour with a narrow sand beach on the island of Ponza (reached by ferry from Naples or Rome). After a morning swimming in pristine water, I love to cruise over to Cala Feola to tie my dinghy to the rocks beside the restaurant's shaded terrace then enjoy a lazy lunch of parmigiana made with prickly pear paddles, anchovies spiked with vinegar, *linguine* with spiny lobster, and mixed fried fish. The food is prepared by a barefoot cook and served on tables overlooking the sea. The best dessert is a nap on the beach among the sunning *ponzesi*.
*Mains from €16, no website, +39 338 648 6110*
**Katie Parla, author of Food of the Italian Islands**

**28 Trattoria Da Cesare al Casaletto, Rome**
Cesare al Casaletto is on the ground floor of a residential building a 30-minute tram ride from Rome's historic centre. The distance does nothing to dissuade devotees such as me, who come for flawless versions of *cucina romana,* with an elevated yet affordable wine list. My go-to order is a parade of fried starters such as gnocchi on a pool of *cacio e pepe* sauce, aubergine croquettes and simmered beef meatballs. The half-rigatoni with oxtail sauce and pecorino cheese and fried lamb chops tie for my favourite dishes in town.
*Mains from €12, trattoriadacesare.it* **KP**

**29 Antica Trattoria di Pietro Dal 1934, Melito Irpino, Campania**
The Di Pietro family cook soulful dishes from Campania's Irpinia region, a place so ancient the locals call themselves Samnites, after a pre-Roman tribe. My order begins with a huge spread of regional starters such as frittata, salami made from local *nero casertano* pigs, and fried courgette flowers. I always follow this up with handmade *cicatelli* pasta with a bright tomato sauce spiked with a minty local herb, then roast grass-fed lamb. I pair it all with an age-worthy white wine like those that have enticed connoisseurs to Irpinia for the better part of two millennia, or a pleasantly fruity red made by the proprietors' son.
*Mains from €13, on Facebook* **KP**

**30 La Lanterna di Diogene, near Modena, Emilia Romagna**
Named after a Cynic philosopher, this working farm and restaurant in the village of Solara takes locavore very seriously. The pickled vegetables are grown steps from the table, flour for the *tortellini in brodo* is milled nearby, and pork ribs come from the heritage breed of pigs they raise. Even the balsamic vinegar drizzled over frittatas and ricotta flans is made right here, using centuries-old practices. I always make a detour for La Lanterna when visiting nearby Modena, and ensure I'm not the designated driver so I can enjoy the encyclopedic list of dry Lambruscos, also made locally.
*Mains from €15, lalanternadidiogene.org* **KP**

# Puzzle solutions

*(puzzles on page 82)*

**Answers to quiz**
*by Thomas Eaton*

**1** *World's most populous country (according to United Nations estimates).*
**2** *Mormon (the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).*
**3** *Dracula.*
**4** *Rutherfordium.*
**5** *Richard Harris.*
**6** *Colorado.*
**7** *Air guitar world championships.*
**8** *Guinea coin.*
**9** *Wrote under two-letter pseudonyms: HD; BB; AE.*
**10** *Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor).*
**11** *Designed by Thomas Telford.*
**12** *Types of mammal.*
**13** *Albums of cover versions: John Lennon; David Bowie; Bryan Ferry; UB40.*
**14** *Historical nicknames of coffee.*
**15** *Female drivers who raced in Formula One.*

**Answers to Weekend Crossword**
*by Sy*

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## The kids' quiz
*Molly Oldfield*

**Scan the code** to send Molly a question for a future quiz

**This quiz answers questions posed by children – will you get a better score than your parents?**



**1 João, 5, asks: why are pandas so fat?**
**A** Because they do zero exercise and sit around being lazy
**B** So that they can store up lots of energy for the winter months
**C** Because bamboo can be very fatty
**D** Because it makes them so cuddly that no predators want to eat them as they think pandas are cute

**2 Aria, 9, asks: what animals are related to pandas?**
**A** Koalas
**B** Otters
**C** Red pandas
**D** Bears

**3 Elise, 8, asks: how do mushrooms communicate with trees?**
**A** By puffing out their tops to signal to trees
**B** Through tiny threads called mycelium
**C** By releasing pungent smells
**D** By waving at trees

**4 Clementine, 7, asks: what does looking at mobile phones and social media do to your brain?**
**A** It turns your brain into scrambled eggs and makes your eyes go square
**B** It has no effect at all on your brain
**C** It turns your brain into a robot brain
**D** Scientists don't know exactly what it does but it can be very addictive!

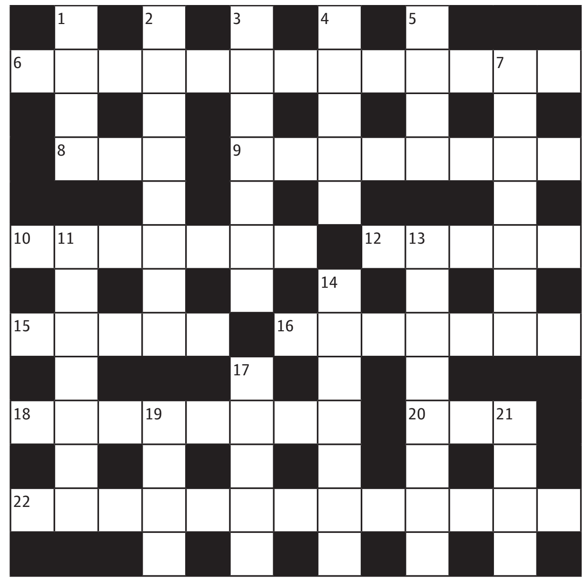
**5 Max, 10, asks: what is the name of the biggest vein in your body?**
**A** The aorta
**B** The jugular
**C** The capillaries
**D** The vena cava

***Answers (no peeking!)***
*1 B. Pandas are fat because they have microbes in their gut that make them put on weight even though they only eat healthy leaves. Scientists believe this is so they can store fat reserves for the winter months, when there is less food around.*
*2 D. Giant pandas are most closely related to other types of bears, such as polar bears.*
*3 B. Mushrooms and trees communicate in an amazing underground network that some call the "wood-wide web". Mushrooms are connected to tiny threads called mycelium, a bit like roots, and these connect with tree roots underground. Through these channels, trees and mushrooms can communicate about all sorts of things such as being thirsty or needing sunlight.*
*4 D. There has been a lot of research into how phones and social media affect the brain. Although it's difficult to know the exact impact, lots of studies suggest that looking at your phone for too long might lead to addiction, which isn't very good!*
*5 D. The vena cava is the biggest vein in the body. It brings deoxygenated blood back to your heart to get more oxygen.*

***Molly Oldfield hosts Everything Under the Sun, a weekly podcast (and book) answering children's questions. Does your child have a question? To submit one, scan the QR code above***

ILLUSTRATION: HENNIE HAWORTH

## Weekend crossword
*Sy*



**Across**
**6** Things to do before you die? (3,6,4)
**8** The … , British tabloid newspaper (3)
**9** See 1
**10** Wild pig commonly found in southern Africa (7)
**12** See 1
**15** 16 for ….., play by Samuel Beckett (5)
**16/22** ……. for … ………., a poem by CP Cavafy – and a novel by JM Coetzee (7,3,10)
**18** See 1
**20** … Swiatek, world tennis No 1 (3)
**22** See 16

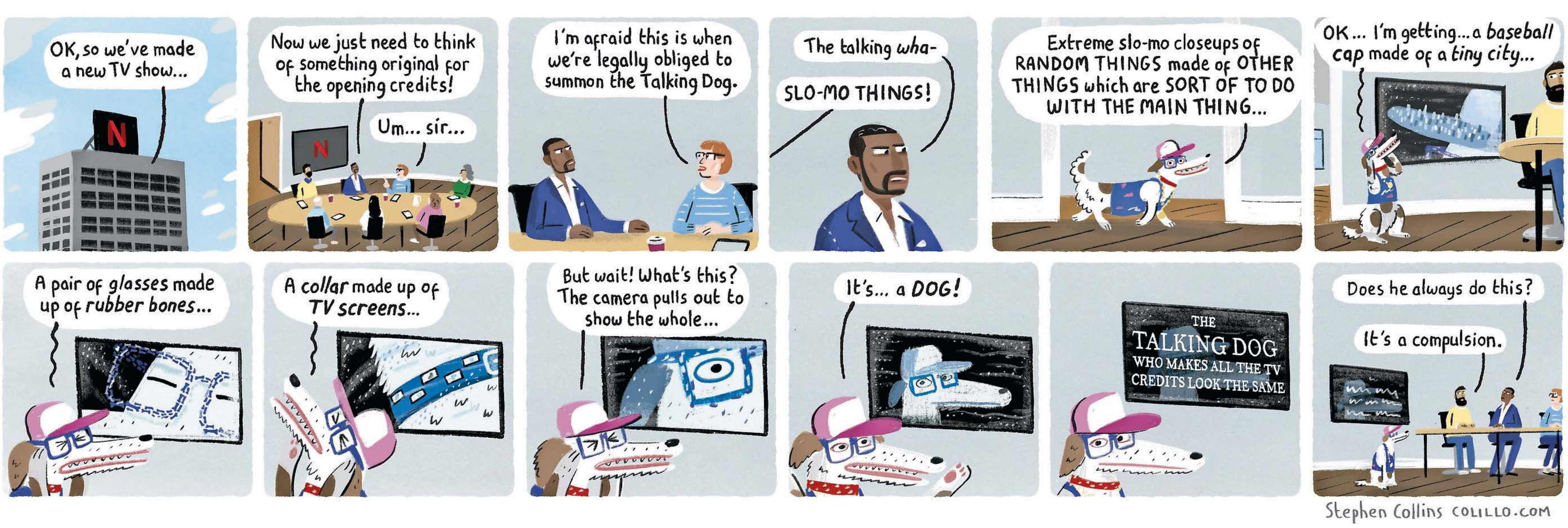
**Down**
**1/9/18/12** Modernist play by Edward Albee (4,6,2,8,5)
**2** Latin phrase for "from the beginning" (2,6)
**3** Country whose capital is Quito (7)
**4** Jawaharlal ….., the first prime minister of India (5)
**5** German supermarket chain (4)
**7** Fruit and marzipan bread usually covered in powdered sugar (7)
**11** Jean ……., French playwright remembered for his adaptation of Antigone (1944) (7)
**13** Bone inflammation that's found in humans and horses (8)
**14** Islamic month of fasting (7)
**17** The king of the Devas in Hinduism (5)
**19** Desert covering much of Mongolia (4)
**21** Pommes …., French dish made from potatoes baked in butter (4)

**Solutions to Crossword and Thomas Eaton's quiz** *page 79*

## Quiz
*Thomas Eaton*

**1** What record, held since time immemorial, is China about to lose to India?
**2** Which faith practises the proxy baptism of its ancestors?
**3** Who sailed from Varna to Whitby on the Demeter?
**4** Which chemical element has the longest name?
**5** Which hell-raising actor kept a suite at the Savoy for 28 years?
**6** Which river carved out the Grand Canyon?
**7** What "music" contest is held annually in Oulu, Finland?
**8** In 1717, the value of what was fixed at 21 shillings?
**What links:**
**9** Poet Hilda Doolittle; children's author Denys Watkins-Pitchford; Irish writer George William Russell?
**10** Portuguese colony, 1702; invaded by Indonesia, 1975; independent, 2002?
**11** Pontcysyllte Aqueduct; Menai Suspension Bridge; Caledonian Canal?
**12** Egg-laying monotreme; marsupial; placental?
**13** Rock 'n' Roll; Pin Ups; These Foolish Things; Labour of Love?
**14** Syrup of soot; ninny broth; Turkey gruel; java; joe?
**15** Maria Teresa de Filippis; Lella Lombardi; Divina Galica; Desiré Wilson; Giovanna Amati?

## Stephen Collins



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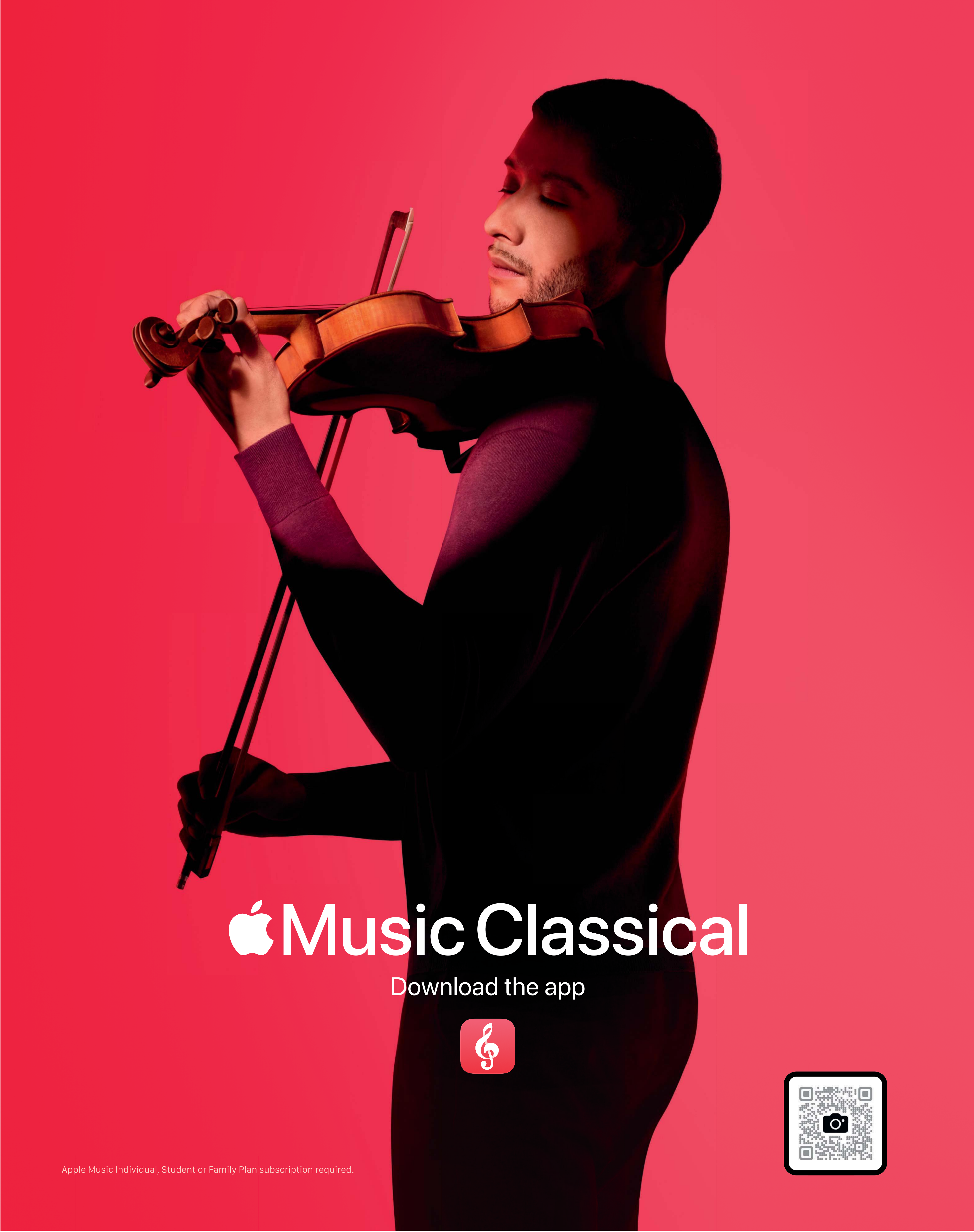
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